OF THE

# GRACE AND DUT[Y]

OF BEING

## SPIRITUALLY-MINDED,

Declared and practically improved.

By *JOHN OWEN*, D[.D.]

To which is added,

A Short ACCOUNT of the AUT[HOR'S]
LIFE and WRITINGS.

THIRD EDITION.

ROM. viii. 6. *To be Spiritually-minded is Life* [...]

COLOS. iii. 2. *Set your Affections on things above* [...]

*GLASGOW*:

[illegible] J. BRYCE and D. [illegible]

THE Publishers having met with suitable Encouragement in this Edition, return their most hearty thanks to the Subscribers, and have as a grateful Acknowledgement, subjoined (which was not promised in the Proposals) an Abstract of the Author's Life, with an Account of his Writings; which they hope will not be unacceptable to the Readers, as it may serve to give them a Taste of the Author's Piety, Learning, and Diligence.

As there have been of late considerable Demands for several other practical Pieces of this Writer, the Publishers are resolved, if they meet with Encouragement to answer such Demands: And will proceed, whenever they obtain as many Subscribers as will indemnify the Charges, to another excellent Performance of the same Author, Intituled, A DECLARATION of the Glorious Mystery of the *PERSON* of *CHRIST*, GOD and MAN. With the Infinite Wisdom, Love, and Power, of GOD in the Contrivance and Constitution thereof. As also of the *Grounds* and *Reasons* of his Incarnation, the *Nature* of his Ministry in Heaven, the *Present State* of the Church above thereon, and the *Use* of his Person in Religion. With an Account and Vindication of the *Honour*, *Worship*, *Faith*, *Love*, and *Obedience* due unto him, in and from the Church.

The Book will be Printed on the same Type and Paper with this Piece now published; it will consist of about the same Number of Pages, and will be sold to Subscribers at the same Price.

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# THE PREFACE.

I Think it necessary to give the reader a brief account of the nature and design of the plain ensuing discourse, which may both direct him in the reading, and be some kind of apology for myself in the publishing of it. He may therefore know, that the thoughts here communicated, were originally private meditations for my own use, in a season wherein I was every way unable to do any thing for the edification of others, and far from expectation that ever I should be so any more in this world. Receiving, as I thought, some benefit and satisfaction in the exercise of my own meditations therein, when God was graciously pleased to restore a little strength unto me, I insisted on the same subject, in the instruction of a private *congregation*; and this I did partly out of a sense of the *advantage* I had received myself by being conversant in them, and partly, from an apprehension, that the duties *directed* and *pressed* unto, in the whole *discourse*, were seasonable from all sorts of present circumstances, to be declared and urged on the *minds* and *consciences* of *professors*. For leaving others unto the choice of their own *methods* and *designs*, I acknowledge that these are the two things whereby I regulate my work in the whole course of my *ministry*. To impart those truths of whose power I hope I have in some measure, a real *experience*, and to press those *duties* which [illegible] *occasions*, *temptations*, and other *circumstances* [illegible] necessary to be attended unto in a prevailing [illegible] the things which I would principally [illegible] to in the work of teaching others. For as [illegible] of the *ministry*, in general, the *whole counsel of God*

concerning the salvation of the *church by Jesus Christ* is to be declared; so in particular, we are not to *fight uncertainly as men beating the air, nor shoot our arrows at random, without a certain scope and design.* Knowledge of the flock whereof we are overseers, with a due *consideration* of their *wants*, their *graces*, their *temptations*, their *light*, their *strength* and *weakness*, are required herein. And when in pursuance of that design, the preparation of the word to be dispensed, proceeds from zeal to the glory of God, and compassion unto the souls of men; when it is delivered with the demonstration of a due reverence unto God whose word it is, and of authority towards them unto whom it is dispensed, with a deep sense of that great account which both they that preach, and they that hear the word preached, must shortly give, before the *judgment seat of Christ*; there may be a comfortable expectation of a blessed issue of the whole work. But my present design is only to declare in particular, the reasons why I judged the preaching and publishing of this small and plain discourse concerning the *Grace and Duty of being Spiritually-minded*, not to be altogether unseasonable at this time, in the present circumstances of most Christians. And the first thing which I would observe unto this end is, the present importunity of the world to impose itself on the minds of men; and the various ways of insinuation whereby it possesseth and filleth them. If it attain hereunto, if it can fill the minds, the thoughts and affections with itself, it will in some, fortify the soul against faith and obedience, and in others, weaken all grace, and endanger eternal ruin.

*For if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us;* and when the world fills our thoughts, it will entangle our affections. And first, The present state of all public affairs in it, with an apprehended concernment of private persons therein, continually

exerciseth the thoughts of many, and is almost the only subject of their mutual converse. For the world is at present in a mighty hurry, and being in many places cast off from all foundations of stedfastness, it makes the minds of men giddy with its revolutions, or disorderly in the expectations of them.

Thoughts about these things are both allowable and unavoidable, if they take not the mind out of its own power, by their multiplicity, vehemency, and urgency, until it be unframed as unto spiritual things, retaining neither room nor time for their entertainment.

Hence men walk and talk, as if the world were all, when comparatively it is nothing.

And when men come with their warmed affections reeking with thoughts of these things unto the performance of, or attendance unto any spiritual duty, it is very difficult for them, if not impossible to stir up any grace unto a due and vigorous exercise. Unless this plausible advantage which the world hath obtained of insinuating itself and its occasions into the minds of mind, so as to fill them, and possess them, be watched against, and obviated, so far, at least, as that it may not transform the mind into its own image and likeness, this grace of being *spiritually-minded* which is *life and peace*, cannot be attained nor kept unto its due exercise.

Nor can we be, any of us, delivered from this snare, at this season, without a watchful endeavour to keep and preserve our minds in the constant contemplation of things *spiritual* and *heavenly*, proceeding from the prevalent adherence of our affections unto them, as will appear in the ensuing discourse.

Again, There are so great and pregnant evidences of the prevalency of an earthly, worldly frame of spirit, in many who make profession of religion, that it is high time they were called unto a due consideration, how unanswerable they are therein, unto the power and spirituality of that religion which they

profeſs. There is no way whereby ſuch a frame may be evinced to prevail in many; yea, in the generality of ſuch profeſſors, that is not manifeſt unto all. In their habits, attires, and veſtments, in their uſual converſe and miſpenſe of time, in their over liberal entertainment of themſelves and others unto the borders of exceſs, and ſundry other things of an alike nature, there is in many, ſuch a conformity unto the world (a thing ſeverely forbidden) that it is hard to make a diſtinction between them. And theſe things do manifeſt ſuch a predominacy of carnal affections in the minds of men, as whatever may be pretended unto the contrary, is inconſiſtent with ſpiritual peace. To call men off from this evil frame of heart and mind, to diſcover the ſin and danger of it, to direct them unto the ways and means whereby it may be effected, to ſupply their thoughts and affections with better objects, to diſcover and preſs that exerciſe of them which is indiſpenſibly required of all believers, if they deſign life and peace, is, ſome part of the work of the enſuing diſcourſe.

It may be, it will be judged but a weak attempt as unto the attaining of that end. But it cannot be denied to have theſe two advantages; Firſt, That it is ſeaſonable; and Secondly, That it is ſincerely intended. And if it have this only ſucceſs, that it may occaſion others who have more ability and opportunity than I have, to bring their aſſiſtance for an oppoſition unto the vehement and importunate inſinuations of the world in theſe things, to have an entertainment in the minds of profeſſors, this labour will not be loſt. But things are come to that paſs amongſt us, that unleſs a more than ordinary vigorous exerciſe of the miniſtry of the word, with other means appointed unto the ſame end be ingaged in, to recall profeſſors, unto that ſtrict mortification, that ſincerity of converſation, that ſeparation from the ways of the world, that heavenly mindedneſs, that delight in the

the contemplation of spiritual things, which the gospel and the whole nature of the Christian religion do require, we shall lose the glory of our profession, and leave it very uncertain what will be our eternal condition. The same may be spoken concerning *love of the world* as unto the advantages and emoluments which men trust to attain unto themselves thereby. This is that which renders men earthly-minded, and most remote from having their *conversations above*. In the pursuit of this corrupt affection do many professors of religion, grow withering, useless, sapless, giving no evidence that the love of God abideth in them. On these and many other accounts, do many Christians evidence themselves to be strangers from *spiritual-mindedness*, from a life of meditation and holy contemplation on things above; yet unless we are found in these things in some good measure, no grace will thrive or flourish in us: No duty will be rightly performed by us, no condition sanctified or improved, nor are we prepared, in a due mannner, or *made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light*. Wherefore, as was said, to direct and provoke men, unto that which is the only remedy of all these evils which alone is the means of giving them a view, into, and a foretaste of eternal glory; especially unto such who are in my own condition, namely, In a very near approach unto a departure out of this world, is the design and scope of the ensuing discourse; which is recommended unto the grace of God for the benefit of the reader.

JOHN OWEN.

THE

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## A CHARACTER of the Author, Dr. *John Owen*, taken from a sermon preached by *David Clarkson*, B. D. first Lord's Day after his Interment.

A Great light is fallen, one of eminency for holiness and learning, and pastoral abilies; a pastor, a scholar, a skilful divine of the first magnitude; holiness gave a divine lustre to all his other accomplishments, shined in his whole course, was diffused thro' his whole conversation: I need not tell you of this who knew him, that it was his great design to promote holiness in the life and exercise of it among you: But it was his great complaint, that its power declined among professors. It was his care and endeavour to prevent or cure spiritual decays in his own flock: He was a burning and shining light, and you for a while rejoiced in his light. Alas! it was but for a while; and we may rejoice in it still. Those practical discourses which he hath published, do give the world a taste of his temper. There are some creatures that love to bark at the light, instead of making better use of it; he met with such, I mean such as wrote against him, who thought themselves concerned to represent him odious to the world; but with great advantage to him, because they could not do it but by groundless surmises, and false suggestions, such as shewed the authors of them malicious, and rendered them ridiculous. He was a master of all such parts of learning as were

were requiſite to a moſt accompliſhed divine. Thoſe that underſtood him, and will be juſt, cannot deny him the reputation and honour of a great ſcholar; and thoſe that detract from him in this, ſeem to be led by a ſpirit of envy, which would not ſuffer them willingly to ſee ſo great an ornament among thoſe that are of another perſuaſion. Indeed he had parts that were able to maſter any thing he applied himſelf unto, tho' he reſtrained himſelf to thoſe ſtudies which might render him moſt ſervicable to Chriſt and the ſouls of men. He had extraordinary intellectuals, a vaſt memory, a quick apprehenſion, a clear and piercing judgment. He was a paſſionate lover of light and truth, of divine truth eſpecially; and he purſued it ſo unweariedly, thro' painful waſting ſtudies, ſuch as impaired his health and ſtrength, and ſuch as expoſed him to many diſtempers, with which he conflicted many years; and ſome may blame him for this as a ſort of intemperance, but it is the eaſieſt to be excuſed of any, and hereby ſhewed he was ready to ſpend and to be ſpent for Chriſt: He did not bury his talent, with which he was richly furniſhed, but was ſtill laying them forth for the Lord, who had entruſted him. He preached while his ſtrength and liberty would ſerve, then by diſcourſe and writing.

That he was an excellent preacher, none will deny who knew him, and knew what preaching was, and think it not the worſe becauſe it is ſpiritual and evangelical. He had an admirable facility in diſcourſing upon any ſubject, and that pertinently and decently, and could better expreſs

him-

himself, *Ex Tempore*, than many others with premeditation: Those that understood him best, observed that he was never at a loss for want of expressions, (which is a happiness that few can pretend to;) and this he could shew upon all occasions in the presence of the highest persons in the nation, and from the greatest to the meanest. Hereby he shewed that he had a command of his learning: And his vast reading was by this made useful, in resolving doubts, and clearing what was obscure, preventing breaches, and healing them which sometimes seemed incurable: Not only we, but all our brethren, will see reason to bewail the loss of him upon this account; his conversation was not only advantagious, in respect of his pleasantness and obliging temper, but there was such attractives in it as made it desirable by persons of the greatest quality at home and abroad; only this may be said, it was desired by so many, that few could enjoy it. I need speak nothing of his writings (tho' that is another head that I intimated) they commend themselves to the world: If holiness, or learning, or judgment, or a masculine unaffected stile can truly set them forth, his practical discourses cannot but find acceptation with those who are sensible of their souls concern, and can relish that which is spiritual and edifying, and value that which is not common and trivial. His excellent commentary upon the Hebrews, gained him and it honour and esteem, not only at home but in foreign countries, as I have had credible notice when that was finished; (and it was a merciful provi-

dence that he lived to finish it.) He said, 'Now 'his work was done, it was time for him to die.' There were several other discourses that seem controversial, and are so; and indeed our loss of him in this respect seems to be irreparable by any thing that is in our present prospect.

The due management of controversies requires such great abilities, as oblige to a constant, diligent, and undefatigable application to laborious studies; and yet the truths of the gospel, which should be dearer to us than our outward concerns, are like to be suppressed and adulterated, unless the Spirit of truth raise up some to assert and vindicate them. He had a singular dexterity this way for the managing of controversies; and those truths that he vindicated, were such as were most in danger by the apostatizing spirit of this age. Some may think his genius led him much to such debates; but, as I have observed, he did not affect to be an aggressor, but stood upon the defensive, and rather obliged than exasperated his adversary; and made it appear, he did not write so much against any man's person, as for the truth. I heard one of them declare, it would not trouble a man to be opposed in such a way as this great Doctor did treat his greatest antagonists with. It is usual with persons of extraordinary parts, to straggle from the common road, and to affect novelty, tho' thereby they lose the best conduct; as if they could not appear eminent unless they marched alone; but to this the deceased was a stranger, in that he did not affect singularity, especially in vindicating those truths

that

that were transmitted to us by our first reformers, and were owned by the best divines of the church of England. What have we lost! what hath the truth lost in such a champion? but it falleth heaviest because most directly and immediately upon this congregation: We had a light in our candlestick that did not only enlighten the room, but gave light to others far and near; but it is extinguished; we did not sufficiently value it: I wish we might not say our sins have put it out We had an especial honour and ornament, such as other churches would much prize, but the crown is fallen from our heads: Yea, may we not add, Woe unto us, for we have sinned; we have lost an excellent pilot, when we have most need of him, when a fierce storm is coming upon us; I dread the consequences of it, considering the weakness of those that are left at the helm; if we are not sensible of it, 'tis because our blindness is great. Let us beg of God that he would prevent what this threatens: Beg of him that he would make up his loss; or if it be not repaired, if it cannot be repaired, yet that the sad consequences of it may be prevented: Pray in the last words of this dying person to me, That the Lord would double his spirit: Pray that the Lord would not remember against us former iniquities, but that his tender mercies may speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low.

ROM. viii. 6.

*But to be spiritually-minded is Life and Peace.*

# CHAP. I.

## *The Words of the Text explained.*

THE expression in our translation sounds differently from that in the original. To be *spiritually minded*, [illegible]. In the original it is [illegible] as that in the former part of the verse is [illegible] which we render to be *carnally-minded*. In the margin we read the *minding of the flesh* and the *minding of the spirit*. And there is great variety in the rendring of the words in all translations, both ancient and modern. *Prudentia, Sapientia, Intelligentia, Mens, Cogitatio, Discretio, id quod Spiritus sapit*; the Wisdom, the Understanding, the Mind, the Thoughts or Contrivance, the Discretion of the Spirit, that which the Spirit savoureth, are used to express it. All our English translations from Tindal's the first of them, have constantly used, to be *spiritually-minded*. Neither do I know any words whereby the emphasis of the original, considering the design of the apostle in the place, can be

be better expressed. But the meaning of the holy Ghost in them must be further enquired into.

In the whole verse there are two entire propositions containing a double Antithesis, the one in their subjects, the other in their predicates. And this Opposition is the highest and greatest that is beneath eternal blessedness, and eternal ruin.

The opposite subjects, are the *minding of the flesh, and the minding of the spirit*; or the being *carnally-minded*, and *spiritually minded*. And these two, do constitute two states of mankind, unto the one of which every individual person in the world doth belong. And it is of the highest concernment unto the souls of men, to know whether of them they appertain unto. As unto the qualities expressed by the flesh and the spirit, there may be a mixture of them in the same persons at the same time; there is so in all that are regenerate. For in them 'the flesh lusteth against the 'spirit, and the spirit lusteth against the flesh, and 'these are contrary,' Gal. v. 17. Thus different contrary actings in the same subject constitute not distinct states. But where either of them is predominant, or hath a prevalent rule in the soul, there it makes a different state. This distinction of states, the apostle expresseth v. 9. 'But ye are 'not in the flesh, but in the spirit.' Some are in the flesh, and cannot please God, v. 8. They are after the flesh, v. 5. they walk after the flesh, v. 1. they live after the flesh, v. 13. This is one state. Others are in the spirit, v. 9. after the spirit, v. 5. walk after the spirit, v. 1. This is the other state. The first sort are carnally-minded, the other are spiritual-

spiritually-minded. Unto one of these states every living man belongs; he is under the conduct of the flesh or of the spirit; there is no middle state; tho' there are different degrees in each of these as to good and evil.

The difference between these two states is great, and the distance in a manner infinite; because an eternity in blessedness or misery doth depend upon it. And this at present is evidenced by the different fruits and effects of the principles and their operations which constitute these different states; which is expressed in the opposition that is between the Predicates of the proposition; For the minding of the flesh is death; but the minding of the spirit is life and peace.

I. To be carnally-minded is death. Death as it is absolutely penal, is either spiritual or eternal. The first of these it is formally, the other meritoriously. It is formally death spiritual; for they that are carnally-minded, are dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1. For those who fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind, are by nature children of wrath, v. 3. are penally under the power of spiritual death. They are dead in sins and the uncircumcision of the flesh, Col. ii. 13. And it is death eternal, meritoriously. For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, Rom. viii. 13. as the wages of sin is death, chap. vi. 23.

The reason why the apostle denounces so woful a doom, so dreadful a sentence on the carnal mind, he declares in the two next verses. 'For 'the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is 'not subject unto the law of God, nor indeed can 'be; so then they that are in the flesh cannot

please God. If it be thus with the carnal mind, it is no wonder that to be carnally-minded is death; it is not meet it should be any thing else. That which is enmity against God, is under the curse of God.

In opposition hereunto it is affirmed, that to be spiritually-minded, or the minding of the spirit, is life and peace. And these are the things which we are particularly to enquire into; namely, what is this minding of the spirit; and then, how it is life and peace.

1. The spirit in this context is evidently used in a double sense, as is usual where both the holy Spirit himself, and his work on the souls of men, are related unto. (1.) The person of the Spirit of God himself, or the holy Ghost is intended by it, v. 9. 'If so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.' And so also, v. 11. 'The Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead.' He is spoken of as the principal efficient cause of all the spiritual mercies and benefits here and afterwards insisted on. (2.) It is used for the principle of spiritual life wrought in all that are regenerate by the holy Ghost. 'For that which is born of the spirit is Spirit,' John iii. 6.

It is most probable that the name spirit is here used in the latter sense, not for the Spirit himself, but for that which is born of the Spirit, the principle of spiritual life in them that are born of God. For it is in its nature, actings, inclinations, and operations opposed unto the flesh, v. 1. 4, 5. But the flesh here intended, is that inherent corrupt principle of depraved nature, whence all evil actions do proceed, and wherewith the actions

of

of all evil men are vitiated. The opposition between them is the same with that mentioned and declared by the apostle, Gal. v. 17, 18, &c. Wherefore the spirit in this place is the holy vital principle of new obedience wrought in the souls of believers by the holy Ghost, enabling them to live unto God.

2. Unto this spirit there is φρόνημα ascribed, which, as we have intimated, is translated with great variety. φρόνησις, is the principal power and act of the mind. It is its light, wisdom, prudence, knowledge, understanding and discretion. It is not so with respect unto speculation, or ratiocination meerly; which is διάνοια, or σύνεσις. But this φρόνησις is its power as it is practical, including the habitual frame and inclination of the affections also. It is its faculty to conceive of things with a delight in them, and adherence unto them, from that suitableness which it finds in them unto all its affections. Hence we translate φρονεῖν sometimes to think, that is, to conceive and judge, Rom. xii. 3. Sometimes to set the affections, Col. iii. 2. to have such an apprehension of things as to cleave unto them with our affections. Sometimes to mind; to mind earthly things, Phil. iii. 19. which includeth that relish and savour which the mind finds in the things it is fixed on. No where doth it design a notional conception of things only; but principally the engagement of the affections unto the things which the mind apprehends. Φρόνημα the word here used, expresseth the actual exercise τῆς φρονήσεως, of the power of the mind before described. Wherefore the minding of the spirit, is the actual exercise of the mind as renew-

ed by the holy Ghost, as furnished with a principle of spiritual life and light, in its conception of spiritual things, and the setting of its affections on them, as finding that relish and savour in them, wherewith it is pleased and satisfied.

And something we must yet further observe, to give light unto this description of the minding of the spirit as it is here spoken of.

1st, It is not spoken of absolutely as unto what it is in itself, but with respect unto its power and prevalency in us; significantly rendred, to be spiritually-minded; that is, to have the mind changed and renewed by a principle of spiritual life and light, so as to be continually acted and influenced thereby into thoughts and meditations of spiritual things, from the affections cleaving unto them with delight and satisfaction. So on the contrary it is, when men mind earthly things. From a principle of love unto them, arising from their suitableness unto their corrupt affections, their thoughts, meditations and desires are continually engaged about them. Wherefore,

2dly, Three things may be distinguished in the great duty of being spiritually-minded under which notion it is here recommended unto us.

1. The actual exercise of the mind in its thoughts, meditations and desires about things spiritual and heavenly. So is it expressed in the verse foregoing. They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; they think on them, their contrivances are about them, and their desires after them. But they that are after the spirit, the things of the spirit. They mind them by fixing their thoughts and meditations upon them.

2. The

2. The inclination, disposition and frame of the mind, in all its affections, whereby it adheres and cleaves unto spiritual things. This minding of the spirit resides habitually in the affections. Wherefore the *φρόνημα* of the spirit, or of the mind as renewed and acted by a spiritual principle of light and life, is the exercise of its thoughts, meditations and desires on spiritual things, proceeding from the love and delight of its affections in them, and engagement unto them.

3. A complacency of mind from that gust, relish and savour which it finds in spiritual things, from their suitableness unto its constitution, inclinations and desires. There is a salt in spiritual things, whereby they are condited and made savory unto a renewed mind; tho' to others they are as the white of an egg, that hath no taste or savour in it. In this gust and relish lies the sweetness and satisfaction of spiritual life. Speculative notions about spiritual things, when they are alone, are dry, sapless and barren. In this gust we taste by experience that God is gracious, and that the love of Christ is better than wine, or whatever else hath the most grateful relish unto a sensual appetite. This is the proper foundation of that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.

All these things do concur in the minding of the spirit, or to constitute any person spiritually-minded. And although the foundation of the whole duty included in it, lies in the affections, and their immediate adherence unto spiritual things, whence the thoughts and meditations of the mind about them do proceed, yet I shall treat of the distinct parts of this duty in the order

laid down, beginning with the exerciſe of our thoughts and meditations about them. For they being the firſt genuine actings of the mind, according unto the prevalency of affections in it, they will make the beſt and moſt evident diſcovery of what nature the ſpring is from whence they do ariſe. And I ſhall not need to ſpeak diſtinctly unto what is mentioned in the third place concerning the complacency of the mind in what its affections are fixed on, for it will fall in with ſundry other things that are to be ſpoken unto.

But before we proceed, it is not amiſs, as I ſuppoſe, to put a remark upon thoſe important truths, which are directly contained in the words, propoſed as the foundation of the preſent diſcourſe. As,

1. To be ſpiritually-minded is the great diſtinguiſhing character of true believers from all unregenerate perſons. As ſuch, is it here aſſerted by the apoſtle. All thoſe who are carnally-minded, who are in the fleſh, they are unregenerate, they are not born of God, they pleaſe him not, nor can do ſo, but muſt periſh forever. But thoſe who are ſpiritually-minded, are born of God, do live unto him, and ſhall come to the enjoyment of him. Hereon depends the trial and determination of what ſtate we do belong unto.

2. Where any are ſpiritually-minded, there and there alone is life and peace. What theſe are, wherein they do conſiſt, what is their excellency and preheminence above all things in this world, how they are the effects and conſequents of our being ſpiritually-minded, ſhall be afterwards declared.

There is neither of theſe conſiderations, but is

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sufficient to demonstrate of how great concernment unto us it is to be spiritually-minded, and diligently to enquire whether we are so or no.

It will therefore be no small advantage unto us, to have our souls and consciences always affected with, and in due subjection unto the power of this truth; namely, that to be spiritually-minded is life and peace; whence it will follow; that whatever we may think otherwise, if we are not so, we have neither of them, neither life nor peace. It will, I say, be of use unto us, if we are affected with the power of it. For many greatly deceive themselves in hearing the word. They admit of sacred truths in their understanding, and assent unto them; but take not in the power of them on their consciences, nor strictly judge of their state and condition by them, which proves their ruin. For hereby they seem to themselves [illegible] believe, that whereof in truth they believe [illegible] syllable as they ought. They hear it, th[illegible]stand it in the notion of it, they assent [illegible] at least they do not contradict it, yea, they [illegible] it oftentimes and approve of it, [illegible] believe it not. For if they did, they [illegible] themselves by it, and reckon on it, that [illegible] be with them at the last day, according as things are determined therein.

Or such persons are, as the apostle James declares, "like a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself and goeth his ways, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was," Jam. i. 23, 24. There is a representation made of them, their state and condition unto them in the world; they behold it,

and conclude that it is even so with them, as the word doth declare. But immediately their minds are filled with other thoughts, acted by other affections, taken up with other occasions, and they forget in a moment the representation made of themselves and their condition. Wherefore all that I have to offer on this subject will be utterly lost, unless a firm persuasion hereof be fixed on our minds, unless we are under the power of it, that to be spiritually-minded is life and peace; so that whatever our light and profession be, our knowledge of our duty, without this we have indeed no real interest in life and peace.

These things being premised, I shall more practically open the nature of this duty, and what is required unto this frame of spirit. To be spiritually-minded may be considered either as unto the nature and essence of it, or as unto its degrees; for one may be so more than another, or the same person may be more so at one time than another. In the first way it is opposed unto being carnally-minded, in the other unto being earthly-minded.

To be carnally-minded is, as the apostle speaks, death, it is so every way; and they who are so, are dead in trespasses and sins. This is opposed unto being spiritually-minded as unto its nature or essence. Where a man as unto the substance and being of the grace and duty intended is not spiritually-minded, he is carnally-minded, that is, under the power of death spiritual, and obnoxious unto death eternal. This is the principal foundation we proceed upon; whence we demonstrate the indispensable necessity of the frame of mind enquired after.

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There are two ways wherein men are earthly-minded. The one is absolute, when the love of earthly things is wholly predominant in the mind. This is not formally and properly to be carnally-minded, which is of a larger extent. The one denomination is from the root and principle, namely, the flesh; the other from the object, or the things of the earth. The latter is a branch from the former, as its root. To be earthly-minded, is an operation and effect of the carnal mind in one especial way and instance. And it is as exclusive of life and salvation as the carnal mind itself, Phil. iii. 19. 1 John ii. 16. This therefore is opposed unto the being of spiritual-mindedness, no less than to be carnally-minded, is. When there is in any a love of earthly things that is predominant, whence a person may be rightly denominated to be earthly-minded, he is not, nor can be spiritually-minded at all; he hath no interest in the frame of heart and spirit intended thereby. And thus it is evidently with the greatest part of them who are called Christians in the world, let them pretend what they will to the contrary.

Again; there is a being earthly-minded, which consists in an inordinate affection unto the things of this world. It is that which is sinful, which ought to be mortified, yet is it not absolutely inconsistent with the substance and being of the grace enquired after. Some who are really and truly spiritually-minded, yet may, for a time at least, be under such an inordinate affection unto, and care about earthly things, that if not absolutely, yet comparatively, as unto what they ought to be, and might be, they may be justly said to be earthly-

ly-minded. They are so in respect of those degrees in being spiritually-minded, which they ought to aim at, and may attain unto. And where it is thus, this grace cannot never thrive or flourish, it can never advance unto any eminent degree.

This is the Zoar of many professors; that little one wherein they would be spared. Such an earthly-mindedness as is wholly inconsistent with being spiritually-minded, as unto the state and condition which depends thereon, they would avoid. For this they know would be absolutely exclusive of life and peace: They cannot but know that such a frame is as inconsistent with salvation, as living in the vilest sin that any man can contract the guilt of. There are more ways of spiritual and eternal death than one, as well as of natural. All that die, have not the plague; and all that perish eternally are not guilty of the same profligate sins. The covetous are excluded from the kingdom of God, no less severely than fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, and thieves, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. But there is a degree in being earthly-minded, which they suppose their interest, advantages, relations and occasions of life do call for, which they would be a little indulged in: They may abide in such a frame without a disparagement of their profession. And the truth is, they have too many companions to fear an especial reflection on themselves. The multitude of the guilty take away the fear and shame of the guilt. But besides, they hope well that it is not inconsistent absolutely with being spiritually-minded; only they cannot well deny but that it is contrary unto such degrees in that grace, such thriving in that duty, as

is recommended unto them. They think well of others who are spiritually-minded in an eminent degree. At least they do so as unto the thing it self in general; for when they come unto particular instances of this or that man, for the most part, they esteem what is beyond their own measure to be little better than pretence. But in general to be spiritually-minded in an eminent degree, they cannot but esteem it a thing excellent and desirable. But it is for them who are more at leisure than they are; their circumstances and occasions require them to satisfy themselves with an inferior measure.

To obviate such pretences I shall insist on nothing in the declaration of this duty and the necessity of it, but what is incumbent on all that believe and without which they have no grounds to assure their conscience before God. And at present in general I shall say, Whoever he be, who doth not sincerely aim at the highest degree of being spiritually-minded, which the means he enjoyeth would lead him unto, and which the light he hath received doth call for; who judgeth it necessary unto his present advantages, occasions and circumstances, to rest in such measures or degrees of it, as he cannot but know that they come short of what he ought to aim at, and so doth not endeavour after compleatness in the will of God herein, can have no satisfaction in his own mind, hath no unfailing grounds, whereon to believe, that he hath any thing at all of the reality of this grace in him. Such a person possibly may have life which accompanies the essence of this grace, but he cannot have peace which follows on its

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degree in a due improvement. And it is to be feared, that far the greatest number of them who satisfy themselves in this apprehension, willingly neglecting an endeavour after the further degrees of this grace, and growth in this duty, which their light or convictions, and the means they enjoy do suggest unto them, are indeed carnally-minded, and every way obnoxious unto death.

## CHAP. II.

*A particular Account of the Nature of this Grace and Duty of being Spiritually-minded. How it is stated in and evidenced by our Thoughts.*

HAving stated the general concernments of that frame of mind which is here recommended unto us, we may proceed to enquire more particularly into the nature of it, according to the description before given, in distinct propositions. And we shall carry on both these intentions together: First, to shew, What it is, and wherein it doth consist; and then, How it doth evidence it self, so as that we may frame a right judgment whether it be in us or no. And we shall have no regard unto them, who either neglect or despise these things on any pretence whatever. For this is the word according unto which we shall all shortly be judged: 'To be carnally-minded is 'death; but to be spiritually-minded is life and 'peace.'

Thoughts

Thoughts and meditations as proceeding from spiritual affections are the first things wherein this spiritual-mindedness doth consist, and whereby it doth evidence itself. Our thoughts are like the blossoms on a tree in the spring. You may see a tree in the spring all covered with blossoms that nothing else of it appears. Multitudes of them fall off and come to nothing. Oft-times where there are most blossoms there is least fruit. But yet there is no fruit, be it of what sort it will, good or bad, but it comes in and from some of those blossoms. The mind of man is covered with thoughts as a tree with blossoms. Most of them fall off, vanish and come to nothing, end in vanity; and sometimes where the mind doth most abound with them, there is the least fruit: The sap of the mind is wasted and consumed in them. Howbeit there is no fruit which actually we bring forth, be it good or bad, but it proceeds from some of these thoughts. Wherefore ordinarily these give the best and surest measure of the frame of mens minds. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he, Prov. xxiii. 7. In case of strong or violent temptations, the real frame of a man's heart is not to be judged by the multiplicity of thoughts about any object. For whether they are from Satan's suggestions, or from inward darkness, trouble and horror, they will impose such a continual sense of themselves on the mind, as shall engage all its thoughts about them. As when a man is in a storm at sea, the current of his thoughts runs quite another way, than when he is in safety about his occasions. But ordinarily voluntary thoughts are the best measure and indication of the

the frame of our minds. As the nature of the soil is judged by the grass which it brings forth; so may the disposition of the heart by the predominancy of voluntary thoughts. They are the original acting of the soul; the way whereby the heart puts forth and empties the treasure that is in it; the waters that first rise and flow from that fountain. Every man's heart is his treasury; and the treasure that is in it, is either good or evil; as our Saviour tells us. There is a good and bad treasure of the heart; but whatever a man hath, be it good or evil, there it is. This treasure is opening, emptying and spending itself continually, though it can never be exhausted. For it hath a fountain in nature or grace, which no expence can diminish; yea, it increaseth and getteth strength by it. The more you spend of the treasure of your hearts in any kind, the more will you abound in treasure of the same kind. Whether it be good or evil, it grows by expence and exercise. And the principal way whereby it puts forth itself, is by the thoughts of the mind. If the heart be evil, they are for the most part vain, filthy, corrupt, wicked, foolish: If it be under the power of a principle of grace, and so have a good treasure in it, it puts forth itself by thoughts suitable unto its nature, and compliant with its inclinations.

Wherefore, these thoughts give the best measure of the frame of our minds and hearts. I mean such as are voluntary, such as the mind of its own accord is apt for, inclines and ordinarily betakes itself unto. Men may have a multitude of thoughts about the affairs of their callings and the occasions of life, which yet may give no due

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meaſure of the inward frame of their hearts. So men whoſe calling and work it is to ſtudy the Scripture or the things revealed therein, and to preach them unto others; cannot but have many thoughts about ſpiritual things; and yet may be, and oftentimes are, moſt remote from being ſpiritually minded. They may be forced by their work and calling to think of them early and late, evening and morning; and yet their minds be no way rendred or proved ſpiritual thereby. It were well if all of us who are preachers would diligently examine ourſelves herein. So is it with them who oblige themſelves to read the ſcripture, it may be ſo many chapters every day; notwithſtanding the diligent performance of their taſk, they may be moſt remote from being ſpiritually-minded. See Ezek. xxxiii. 31. But there is a certain track and courſe of thoughts that men ordinarily betake themſelves unto, when not affected with preſent occaſions. If theſe be vain, fooliſh, proud, ambitious, ſenſual or filthy, ſuch is the mind and its frame. If they be holy, ſpiritual and heavenly, ſuch may the frame of the mind be judged to be. But theſe things muſt be more fully explained.

It is the great character and deſcription of the frame of mens minds in an unregenerate condition, or before the renovation of their natures, 'That every imagination of the thoughts of 'their hearts are only evil continually,' Gen. vi. 5. They are continually coining figments and imaginations in their hears, ſtamping them into thoughts that are vain, fooliſh and wicked. All other thoughts in them are occaſional; theſe are

the natural genuine product of their hearts. Hence the cleareſt and ſometimes firſt diſcovery of the bottomleſs evil treaſure of filth, folly and wickedneſs that is in the heart of man by nature, is from the innumerable multitude of evil imaginations, which are there coined and thruſt forth every day. So the wicked are ſaid 'to be like 'the troubled ſea when it cannot reſt, whoſe wa-'ters caſt up mire and dirt,' Iſa. lvii. 20. There is a fulneſs of evil in their hearts, like that of water in the ſea. This fulneſs is troubled or put into continual motion by their luſts and impetuous deſires. Hence the mire and dirt of evil thoughts are continually caſt up in them.

It is therefore evident that the predominancy of voluntary thoughts is the beſt and moſt ſure indication of the inward frame and ſtate of the mind. For if it be ſo on the one ſide as unto the carnal mind, it is ſo on the other as unto the ſpiritual. Wherefore to be ſpiritually-minded in the firſt place is, to have the courſe and ſtream of thoſe thoughts which we ordinarily retreat unto, we approve of as ſuited unto our affections, to be about ſpiritual things. Therein conſiſts the minding of the ſpirit.

But becauſe all men, unleſs horribly profligate, have thoughts about ſpiritual things, yet we know that all men are not ſpiritually-minded, we muſt conſider, What is required unto ſuch thoughts, to render them a certain indication of the ſtate of our minds. And there are theſe three things required hereunto.

1. That they be natural, ariſing from ourſelves, and not from outward occaſions. The Pſalmiſt

mentions the inward thoughts of men, Psal. xlix. 11. and lxiv. 6. But whereas all thoughts are the inward acts of the mind, it should seem that this expression makes no distinction of the especial kind of thoughts intended, from those of another sort. But the difference is not in the formal nature of them, but in the causes, springs and occasions. Inward thoughts are such as arise merely and solely from mens inward principles, dispositions and inclinations, that are not suggested or excited by any outward objects. Such in wicked men are those actings of their lusts, whereby they entice and seduce themselves, Jam. i. 14. Their lusts stir up thoughts leading and encouraging them to make provision for the flesh. These are their inward thoughts. Of the same nature are those thoughts which are the minding of the spirit. They are the first natural egress and genuine acting of the habitual disposition of the mind and soul.

Thus in covetous men there are two sorts of thoughts, whereby their covetousness acts itself. First; Such as are occasioned by outward objects and opportunities. So it was with Achan; Josh. vii. 21. 'When, saith he, I saw among the spoils 'a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred 'shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, then I 'coveted them.' His sight of them with an opportunity of possessing himself of them, excited covetous thoughts and desires in him. So is it with others every day, whose occasions call them to converse with the objects of their lusts. And some by such objects may be surprized into thoughts that their minds are not habitually in-

clined unto. And therefore when they are known, it is our duty to avoid them. But the ſame ſort of perſons have thoughts of this nature ariſing from themſelves only, their own diſpoſitions, and inclinations, without any outward provocations. 'The vile perſon will ſpeak villany, 'and his heart will work iniquity,' Iſa. xxxii. 6. And this he doth as the liberal deviſeth liberal things, ver. 8. from his own diſpoſition and inclination, he is contriving in his thoughts how to act according to them. So the unclean perſon hath two ſorts of thoughts with reſpect unto the ſatisfaction of his luſts. Firſt, Such are occaſioned in his mind by the external objects of it. Hereunto ſtage-plays, revellings, dancings with the ſociety of bold perſons, perſons of corrupt communication do contribute their wicked ſervice. For the avoidance of this ſnare, Job made a covenant with his eyes, chap. xxxi. 1. And our Saviour gives that holy declaration of the evil of it, Mat. v. 28. But he hath an habitual ſpring of theſe thoughts in himſelf conſtantly inclining and diſpoſing him thereunto. Hence the apoſtle Peter tells us that ſuch perſons 'have eyes full of adul'tery, and that cannot ceaſe from ſin,' 2 Pet. ii. 14. Their own affections make them reſtleſs in their thoughts and contrivances about ſin. So is it with them who are given to exceſs in wine or ſtrong drink. They have pleaſing thoughts raiſed in them from the object of their luſt repreſented unto them. Hence Solomon gives that advice againſt the occaſion of them, Prov. xxiii. 31. But it is their own habitual diſpoſition which carries them

them unto pleaſing thoughts of the ſatisfaction of their luſts, which he deſcribes, ver. xxxiv. 35. So is it in other caſes. The thoughts of this latter ſort, are mens inward thoughts; and ſuch muſt theſe be of ſpiritual things, whence we may be eſteemed ſpiritually-minded.

Pſal. xlv. 1. Saith the Pſalmiſt, 'My heart is 'inditing a good matter; I ſpeak of the things 'which I have made touching the King.' He was meditating on ſpiritual things, on the things of the perſon and kingdom of Chriſt. Hence his heart bubbled up (as it is in the original) a good matter. It is an alluſion taken from a quick ſpring of living waters; from its own life and fulneſs it bubbles up the water that runs and flows from it. So is it with theſe thoughts in them that are ſpiritually-minded. There is a living fulneſs of ſpiritual things in their minds and affections, that ſpringeth up into holy thoughts about them.

From hence doth our Saviour give us the great deſcription of ſpiritual life. It is 'a well of li-'ving water ſpringing up into everlaſting life.' John iv. 12. The Spirit with his graces reſiding in the heart of a believer, are a well of living water. Nor is it ſuch a well, as content with its own fulneſs, doth not, of its own accord, without any inſtrument or pains in drawing, ſend out its refreſhing waters, as it is with moſt wells tho' of living water. For this is ſpoken by our Saviour in anſwer and oppoſition unto that objection of the woman, upon this mention of giving living water, ver. 10. 'Sir, ſaith ſhe, thou haſt nothing to draw, 'and the well is deep, whence wilt thou have

'this water;' ver 11. True, saith he, such is the nature of this well and water, dead earthly things. They are of no use unless we have instruments, lines and buckets to draw withal. But the living water which I shall give is of another nature. It is not water to be kept in a pit or cistern without us, whence it must be drawn; but it is within us; and that not dead and useless, but continually springing up unto the use and refreshment of them that have it. For so is it with the principle of the new creature, of the new nature, the Spirit and his graces in the heart of them that do believe. It doth of itself and from itself, without any external influence on it, incline and dispose the whole soul unto spiritual actings that tend unto eternal life. Such are the thoughts of them that are spiritually-minded. They arise from the inward principle, inclination and disposition of the soul, are the bublings of this well of living water; they are the mindings of the spirit.

So our Saviour describes them, Mat. xii. 35. 'A good man out of the good treasure of the 'heart bringeth forth good things.' First the man is good; as he said before, Make the tree good, or the fruit cannot be good, ver. 33. He is made so by grace in the change and renovation of his nature; for in ourselves we are every way evil. This good man hath a treasure in his heart. So all men have; as the next words are; 'The 'evil man out of the evil treasure of the heart.' And this is the great difference that is between men in this world. Every man hath a treasure in his heart; that is a prevailing inexhaustible prin-

principle of all his actings and operations. But in some this treasure is good, in others it is evil. That is, the prevailing principle in the heart, which carries along with it its dispositions and inclinations, is in some good and gracious, in others it is evil. Out of this good treasure, a good man bringeth forth good things. The first opening of it, the first bringing of it forth, is by these thoughts. The thoughts that arise out of the heart are of the same nature with the treasure that is in it. If the thoughts that naturally arise and spring up in us, are for the most part vain, foolish, sensual, earthly, selfish, such is the treasure that is in our hearts, and such are we. But where the thoughts that thus naturally proceed from the treasure that is in the heart, are spiritual and holy, it is an argument that we are spiritually-minded.

Where it is not thus with our thoughts, they give no such evidence as that enquired after. Men may have thoughts of spiritual things, and that many of them, and that frequently, which do not arise from this principle, but may be resolved into two other causes. (1.) Inward force. (2.) Outward occasions.

1. Inward force as it may be called. This is by convictions. Convictions put a kind of force upon the mind, or an impression that causeth it to act contrary unto its own habitual disposition and inclination. It is in the nature of water to descend. But apply an instrument unto it, that shall make a compression of it, and force it unto a vent, it will fly upwards vehemently, as if that were its natural motion. But so soon as the force of the impression ceaseth, it returns immediately unto

unto its own proper tendency, descending towards its center. So is it with mens thoughts oft-times. They are earthly, their natural course and motion is downwards unto the earth and the things thereof. But when any efficacious conviction presseth on the mind, it forceth the egress of its thoughts upwards towards heavenly things. It will think much and frequently of them; as if that were their proper motion and course. But so soon as the power of the conviction decays or wears off, that the mind is no more sensible of its force and impression; the thoughts of it return again unto their old course and tract, as the water tends downwards.

This state and frame is graphically described, Psal. lxxviii. 35, 36, 37. 'When he slew them, 'then they sought him, and they returned and 'enquired early after God. And they remembred that God was their rock, and the high God 'their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did but 'flatter him with their mouths, and they lied un'to him with their tongues; for their heart was 'not right with him, neither were they stedfast 'in his covenant.' Men in troubles, dangers, sickness, fears of death, or under effectual conviction of sin from the preaching of the word, will endeavour to think and meditate on spiritual things. Yea, they will be greatly troubled that they cannot think of them more than they do, and esteem it their folly that they think of any thing else. But as freedom and deliverance do approach, so these thoughts decay and disappear. The mind will not be compelled to give place unto

unto them any more. The prophet gives the reason of it, Jer. xiii. 23. 'Can the Ethiopian change 'his skin, or the leopard his spots, then may ye 'also do good, that are accustomed to evil.' They have had another haunt, been taught another course, the habit and inclination of the mind lies another way, and they will no longer tend towards spiritual things, than an impression is on them from their convictions.

And it is an argument of very mean attainments of a low and weak degree in this frame of heart, or in our being spiritually-minded, when our thoughts of spiritual things, do arise or fall according unto renewed occasional convictions. If when we are under rebukes from God in our persons or relations, in fears of death, and the like, and withal have some renewed convictions of sin, in commission, or omission of duties, and thereon do endeavour to be more spiritually-minded in the constant exercise of our thoughts on spiritual things, which we fail in; and these thoughts decay as our convictions in the causes of them, do wear off or are removed, we have attained a very low degree in this grace, if we have any interest in it at all.

Water that ariseth and floweth from a living spring runneth equally and constantly, unless it be obstructed or diverted by some violent opposition; but that which is from thunder-showers, runs furiously for a season, but is quickly dried up. So are those spiritual thoughts which arise from a prevalent internal principle of grace in the heart, they are even and constant, unless an interruption be put upon them for a season by

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temptations. But these which are excited by thunder of convictions, however their streams may be filled for a season; they quickly dry up and utterly decay.

2. Such thoughts may arise in the minds of men not spiritually-minded from outward means and occasions. Such I intend as are indeed useful, yea, appointed of God for this end among others, that they may ingenerate and stir up holy thoughts and affections in us. But there is a difference in their use and operation. In some they excite the inward principle of the mind to act in holy thoughts according unto its own sanctified disposition and prevalent affections. This is their proper end and use. In others they occasionally suggest such thoughts unto the minds of men, which spring only from the notions of the things proposed unto them. With respect unto this end also, they are of singular use unto the souls of men, howbeit such thoughts do not prove men to be spiritually-minded. Where you till and manure your land, if it brings forth plentiful crops of corn, it is evident that the soil itself is good and fertile; the dressing of it only gives occasion and advantage to put forth its own fruit-bearing virtue. But if in the tilling of land, you lay much dung upon it, and it brings forth here and there an handful where the dung lay; you will say, the soil is barren, it brings forth nothing of itself. These means that we shall treat of, are as the tilling of a fruitful soil, which help it in bringing forth its fruit, by exciting its own virtue and power. They stir up holy affections unto holy

thoughts

thoughts and desires. But in others, whose hearts are barren, they only serve, as it were, some of them here and there, to stir up spiritual thoughts, which gives no evidence of a gracious heart or spirit. But because this is a matter of great importance, it shall be handled distinctly by itself.

## CHAP. III.

*Outward means and occasions of thoughts of such Spiritual things, which do not prove men to be spiritually-minded. Preaching of the word. Exercise of Gifts. Prayer. How we may know, Whether our Thoughts of spiritual things in Prayer are truly spiritual Thoughts, proving us to be spiritually-minded.*

1. SUch a means is the preaching of the word itself. It is observed concerning many in the gospel, that they heard it willingly, received it with joy, and did many things gladly, upon the preaching of it. And we see the same thing exemplified in multitudes every day. But none of these things can be without many thoughts, in the minds of such persons, about the spiritual things of the word. For they are the effects of such thoughts, and being wrought in the minds of men, will produce more of the same nature. Yet were they all Hypocrites, concerning whom these

these things are ſpoken, and were never ſpiritually-minded.

The cauſe of this miſcarriage is given us by our Saviour, Mat. xiii. 20, 21. 'He that receiveth the ſeed into ſtony places, the ſame is he 'that heareth the word, and anon receiveth it 'with joy; yet hath he not root in himſelf, but 'dureth for a while.' The good thoughts they have, proceed not from any principle of themſelves. Neither their affections nor their thoughts of theſe things, have any internal root whereon they ſhould grow. So is it with many who live under the preſent diſpenſation of the goſpel. They have thoughts of ſpiritual things continually ſuggeſted unto them; and they do abide with them more or leſs according as they are affected. For I ſpeak not of them who are either deſpiſers of what they hear, or way-ſide hearers, who underſtand nothing of what they hear, and immediately loſe all ſenſe of it, all thoughts about it. But I ſpeak of them who attend with ſome diligence, and receive the word with ſome joy. Theſe inſenſibly grow in knowledge and underſtanding, and therefore cannot be without ſome thoughts of ſpiritual things. Howbeit for the moſt part they are, as was ſaid, but like unto waters that run after a ſhower of rain. They pour out themſelves as if they proceeded from ſome ſtrong living ſpring, whereas indeed they have none at all. When once the waters of the ſhower are ſpent their channel is dry, there is nothing in it but ſtones and dirt. When the doctrine of the word falls on ſuch perſons as ſhowers of rain, it

it gives a courſe, ſometimes greater ſometimes leſs, unto their thoughts toward ſpiritual things. But they have not a well of water in them ſpringing up into everlaſting life. Wherefore after a while that mens minds are dried up from ſuch thoughts; nothing remains in them but earth, and that perhaps foul and dirty.

It muſt be obſerved, that the beſt of men, the moſt holy and ſpiritually-minded, may have, nay, ought to have their thoughts of ſpiritual things excited, multiplied, and confirmed by the preaching of the word. It is one end of its diſpenſation, one principal uſe of it in them by whom it is received. And it hath this effect two ways. (1.) As it is the ſpiritual food of the ſoul, whereby its principle of life and grace is maintained and ſtrengthened. The more this is done, the more ſhall we thrive in being ſpiritually-minded. (2.) As it adminiſtreth occaſion unto the exerciſe of grace. For propoſing the proper object of faith, love, fear, truſt, reverence unto the ſoul, it draws forth all thoſe graces into exerciſe. Wherefore, although the vigorous actings of ſpiritual thoughts be occaſional from the word, be more under and after the preaching of it, than at other times, it is no more but what ariſeth from the nature and uſe of the ordinance, by God's own appointment, nor is it any evidence that thoſe with whom it is ſo, are not ſpiritually-minded; but on the contrary that they are. Yet where men have no other thoughts of this matter but what are occaſioned by the outward diſpenſation of the word, ſuch thoughts do not prove them to be ſpiritually-

ly-minded. Their endeavours in them are like those of men in a dream. Under some oppression of their spirits, their imagination fixeth on something or other, that is most earnestly to be desired or avoided. Herein they seem to themselves to strive with all their might, to endeavour to go, run or contend, but all in vain; every thing fails them, and they are not relieved until they are awaked. So such persons in impressions they receive from the word, seem to strive and contend in their thoughts and resolutions to comply with what is proposed unto them; but their strength fails, they find no success, for want of a principle of spiritual life, and after a time give over their endeavours until they are occasionally renewed again. Now the thoughts which in the dispensation of the word do proceed from an inward principle of grace excited unto its due exercise, are distinguishable from them which are only occasionally suggested unto the mind by the word outwardly preached. For (1.) They are especial actings of faith and love towards the things themselves that are preached. They belong unto our receiving the truth in the love thereof. And love respects the goodness of the things themselves, and not merely the truth of the propositions wherein they are expressed. The other thoughts are only the sense of the mind as affected with light and truth, without any cordial love unto the things themselves. (2.) They are accompanied with complacency of soul arising from love, experience, more or less, of the power of them, and their suitableness unto the new

nature or principle of grace in them. For when our minds find that so indeed it is in us, as it is in the word; that this is that which we would be more conformable unto; it gives a secret complacency with satisfaction unto the soul. The other thoughts which are only occasional, have none of these concomitants or effects, but are dry and barren, unless it be in a few words or transient discourse. (3.) The former are means of spiritual growth. So some say the natural growth of Vegetables is not by insensible motion, but by gusts and sensible eruptions of increase. These are both in spiritual growth, and the latter consists much in those thoughts which the principle of the new nature is excited unto by the word in the latter.

2. The duty of prayer is another means of the like nature. One principal end of it is to excite, stir up, and draw forth the principle of grace, of faith and love in the heart, unto a due exercise in holy thoughts of God and spiritual things, with affections suitable unto them. Those who design not this end in prayer, know not at all what it is to pray. Now all sorts of persons have frequent occasion to join with others in prayer, and many are under the conviction that it is their own duty to pray every day, it may be in their families and otherwise. And it is hard to conceive how men can constantly join with others in prayer, much more how they can pray themselves, but that they must have thoughts of spiritual things every day. Howbeit it is possible that they may have no root, or living spring of them in themselves, but they

are only occaſional impreſſions on their minds from the outward performance of the duty. I ſhall give ſome inſtances of the grounds hereof, which on many reaſons require our diligent conſideration.

Spiritual thoughts may be raiſed in a perſon in his own duty, by the exerciſe of his gifts, when there is no acting of grace in them at all. For they lead and guide the mind unto ſuch things as are the matter of prayer; that is ſpiritual things. Gifts are nothing but a ſpiritual improvement of our natural faculties or abilities. And a man cannot ſpeak or utter any thing but what proceeds from his rational faculties by invention or memory, or both, managed in and by his thoughts, unleſs he ſpeak by rote, and that which is not rational. What therefore proceeds from a man's rational faculty in and by the exerciſe of his gifts, that his thoughts muſt be exerciſed about.

A man may read a long prayer that expreſſeth ſpiritual things, and yet never have one ſpiritual thought ariſe in his mind about them. For there is no exerciſe of any faculty of his mind required unto ſuch reading, but only to attend unto the words that are to be read. This I ſay may be ſo, I do not ſay that it is always ſo, or that it muſt be ſo. But as was ſaid in the exerciſe of gifts, it is impoſſible but there muſt be an exerciſe of reaſon, by invention, judgment and memory; and conſequently thoughts of ſpiritual things. Yet may they all be merely occaſional from the preſent external performance of the duty, without any living ſpring or exerciſe of grace. In ſuch

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a courſe may men of tolerable gifts continue all their days, unto the ſatisfaction of themſelves and others, deceiving both them and their own ſouls.

This being evident from the ſcripture and experience, an enquiry may be made thereon, as unto our own concernment in theſe things; eſpecially of thoſe who have received ſpiritual gifts of their own, and of them alſo in ſome degree, who uſually enjoy the gifts of others in this duty. For it may be aſked, how we ſhall know whether the thoughts which we have of ſpiritual things in and upon prayer do ariſe from gifts only, thoſe of our own or other mens, giving occaſion unto them, or are influenced from a living principle and ſpring of grace in our hearts. A caſe this is (however by ſome it may be apprehended) of great importance, and which would require much time fully to reſolve. For there is nothing whereby the refined ſort of Hypocrites do more deceive themſelves and others, nothing whereby ſome men do give themſelves more countenance in an indulgence unto their luſts, than by this part of the form of godlineſs, when they deny the power thereof. And beſides, it is that wherein the beſt of believers ought to keep a diligent watch over themſelves; in every particular inſtance of the performance of this duty. With reſpect hereunto in an eſpecial manner are they to watch unto prayer. If they are at any time negligent herein, they may reſt in a bare exerciſe of gifts, when on a due examination and trial, they have no evidence of the acting of grace in what they have done. I ſhall therefore with what brevity I can

give a resolution unto this enquiry. And to this end observe,

First, It is an ancient complaint, that spiritual things are filled with great obscurity and difficulty; and it is true. Not that there is any such thing in themselves, for they all come forth from the Father of lights, and are full of light, order, beauty and wisdom. And light and order are the only means whereby any thing makes a discovery of itself. But the ground of all darkness and difficulty in these things lies in ourselves. We can more clearly and steadily see and behold the Moon and the Stars, than we can the Sun when it shines in its greatest lustre. It is not because there is more light in the Moon and Stars than in the Sun, but because the light of the Sun is greater than our visive faculty can directly bear and behold. So we can more clearly discover the truth and distinct nature of things moral and natural, than we can of things that are heavenly and spiritual. See John iii. 14. Not that there is more substance or reality in them, but because the ability of our understanding is more suited unto the comprehension of them. The other are above us. We know but in part, and our minds are liable to be hindred and disordered in their apprehension of things heavenly and spiritual, by ignorance, temptations, and prejudices of all sorts. In nothing more are men subject unto mistakes than in the application of things unto themselves, and a judgment of their interest in them. Fear, self-love, with the prevalency of temptations and corruptions, do all engage their powers to darken the

the light of the mind and to pervert its judgment. In no caſe doth the deceitfulneſs of the heart, or of ſin which is all one, more act itſelf. Hence multitudes ſay peace to themſelves, to whom God doth not ſpeak peace; and ſome who are children of light do yet walk in darkneſs. Hence is that fervent prayer of the apoſtle for help in this caſe, Epheſ. i. 16, 17, 18, 19. There is alſo a great ſimilitude between temporary faith, and that which is ſaving and durable; and between gifts and grace in their operations, which is that that is under preſent conſideration. It is acknowledged therefore, that without the eſpecial light and conduct of the Spirit of God, no man can make ſuch a judgment of his ſtate and his actions, as ſhall be a ſtable foundation of giving glory to God, and of obtaining peace unto his own ſoul. And therefore the greateſt part of mankind do conſtantly deceive themſelves in theſe things.

But ordinarily under this bleſſed conduct in the ſearch of ourſelves and the concernments of our duty, we may come unto a ſatisfaction whether they are influenced by faith, and have grace exerciſed in them, eſpecially this duty of prayer, or whether it derive from the power of our natural faculties, raiſed by lights and ſpiritual gifts only; and ſo whether our ſpiritual thoughts therein do ſpring from a vital principle of grace, or whether they come from occaſional impreſſions on the mind, by the performance of the duty itſelf.

If men are willing to deceive themſelves, or to hide themſelves from themſelves, to walk with God at all peradventures, to leave all things at

hazard, to put off all trials unto that at the laſt day, and ſo never call themſelves unto an account as unto the nature of their duties in any particular inſtance, it is no wonder, if they neither do nor can make any diſtinction in this matter as unto the true nature of their thoughts in ſpiritual duties. Two things are required hereunto.

1. That we impartially and ſeverely examine and try the frames and actings of our minds in holy duties by the word of truth; and thereon not be afraid to ſpeak that plainly unto our ſouls which the word ſpeaks unto us. This diligent ſearch ought to reſpect our principles, aims, ends, actings, with the whole deportment of our ſouls in every duty. See 2 Cor. xiii. 5. If a man receiveth much money, and look only on the outward form and ſuperſcription, when he ſuppoſeth that he hath great ſtore of current coin in gold and ſilver, he may have only heaps of lead or copper by him. But he that trades in it as the comfort and ſupport of his natural life and condition, he will try what he receives both by the ballance and the touch-ſtone, as the occaſion requires, eſpecially if it be in a time when much adulterated coin is paſſant in the world. And if a man reckons on his duties by tale and number, he may be utterly deceived; and be ſpiritually poor and a bankrupt, when he eſteems himſelf rich, encreaſed in goods and wanting nothing. Some duties may appearingly hold in the ballance as to weight, which will not hold it at the touch-ſtone as to worth. Both means are to be uſed if we would not be miſtaken in our accounts.

Thus

Thus God himſelf in the midſt of a multitude of duties calls the people to try and examine themſelves whether or no they are ſuch as have faith and grace in them, and ſo like to have acceptance with him. Iſa. lviii. 2, 3, 4, 5.

2. Add we muſt unto our own diligent enquiry fervent prayers unto God, that he would ſearch and try us, as unto our ſincerity, and diſcover unto us the true frame of our hearts. Hereof we have an expreſs example, Pſal. cxxxix. 23, 24. 'Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me 'and know my thoughts; and ſee if there be any 'wicked way in me, and lead me in the way e'verlaſting.' This is the only way whereby we may have the Spirit of God witneſſing unto our ſincerity, with our own ſpirits. There is need of calling in divine aſſiſtance in this matter, both from the importance of it, and from its difficulty; God alone knowing fully and perfectly what is in the hearts of men.

I no way doubt but that in the impartial uſe of theſe means, a man may come to aſſured ſatiſfaction in his own mind, ſuch as wherein he ſhall not be deceived, whether he doth animate and quicken his thoughts of ſpiritual things in duties with inward vital grace, or whether they are impreſſions on his mind, by the occaſion of the duty.

A duty this is of great importance and neceſſity, now hypocriſy hath made ſo great an in-road on profeſſion, and gifts have deflowred grace in its principal operations. No perſons are in greater danger of walking at hazard with God, than thoſe who live in the exerciſe of ſpiritual gifts in du-

ties, unto their own satisfaction and others. For they may countenance themselves with an appearance of every thing that should be in them in reality and power, when there is nothing of it in them. And so it hath fallen out. We have seen many earnest in the exercise of this gift, who have turned vile and debauched apostates. Some have been known to live in sin and indulgence of their lusts, and yet to abide constant in their duties. Isa. i. 15. And we may hear prayers sometimes that openly discover themselves unto spiritual sense, to be the labour of the brain, by the help of gifts in memory and invention, without an evidence of any mixture of humility, reverence or godly fear; without any acting of faith and love. They flow as wine, yet smell and taste of the unsavory cask from whence they proceed. It is necessary therefore that we should put ourselves on the severest trial, lest we should be found not to be spiritually-minded in spiritual duties.

Gifts are gracious vouchsafements of Christ to make grace useful unto ourselves and others; yea, they may make them useful unto the grace of others, who have no grace in themselves. But as unto our own souls they are of no other advantage or benefit but to stir up grace unto its proper exercise; and to be a vehicle to carry it on, in its proper use. If we do not always regard this in their exercise, we had better be without them. If instead hereof, they once begin to impose themselves practically upon us, so as that we rest in spiritual light acting our inventions, memories and judg-

judgments with a ready utterance, or ſuch as it is, there is no form of prayer can be more prejudicial unto our ſouls. As wine if taken moderately and ſeaſonably helps the ſtomach in digeſtion, and quickens the natural ſpirits, enabling the powers of nature unto their duty, is uſeful and helpful unto it, but if it be taken in exceſs, it doth not help nature, but oppreſs it, and takes on itſelf to do what nature ſhould be aſſiſted unto, it fills mens carcaſſes with diſeaſes as well as their ſouls with ſin. So whilſt ſpiritual gifts are uſed and employed only to excite, aid and aſſiſt grace in its operations, they are unutterably uſeful. But if they put themſelves in the room thereof, to do all that grace ſhould do; they are hurtful and pernicious. We have need therefore to be very diligent in this inquiry, whether our ſpiritual thoughts, even in our prayers, be not rather occaſional from the duty, than ſpring from a gracious principle in our hearts, or are the actings of real ſaving grace.

Secondly, Where thoughts of ſpiritual things in prayer are occaſional only in the way before deſcribed, ſuch prayers will not be a means of ſpiritual growth unto the ſoul. They will not make the ſoul humble, holy, watchful and diligent in univerſal obedience. Grace will not thrive under the greateſt conſtancy in ſuch duties. It is an aſtoniſhing thing to ſee how under frequency of prayer, and a ſeeming fervency therein, many of us are at a ſtand as to viſible thriving in the fruits of grace; and it is to be feared, without any encreaſe of ſtrength in the root of it. God's hand is not ſhortned that he cannot ſave, nor his ear deafened that

he cannot hear. He is the same as in the days of old, when our fathers cried unto him and were delivered, when they trusted in him and were not confounded. 'Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, and to day, and for ever:' Prayer is the same that it was, and shall lose nothing of its prevalency whilst this world endureth. Whence is it then that there is so much prayer amongst us, and so little success. I speak not with respect unto the outward dispensations of divine providence in afflictions or persecutions, wherein God always acts in a way of sovereignty, and oft-times gives the most useful answer unto our prayers by denying our requests. I intend that only whereof the Psalmist giveth us his experience. Psal. cxxxviii. 3. 'In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, 'and strengthnedst me with strength in my 'soul.' Where prayers are effectual, they will bring in spiritual strength. But the prayers of many seem to be very spiritual, and to express all conceivable supplies of grace; and they are persisted in with constancy. And God forbid we should judge them to be hypocritical and wholly insincere. Yet is there a defect somewhere, which should be enquired after. For they are not so answered, as that they who pray them, are strengthned with strength in their souls. There is not that spiritual thriving, that growth in grace which might be expected to accompany such supplications.

I know that a man may pray often, pray sincerely and frequently for an especial mercy, grace, or deliverance from a particular temptation; and yet

yet no spiritual supply of strength unto his own experience come in thereby. So Paul prayed thrice for the removal of his temptation, and yet had the exercise of it continued. In such a case there may be no defect in prayer, and yet the grace in particular aimed at not be attained. For God hath other holy ends to accomplish hereby on the soul. But how persons should continue in prayer, in general, according to the mind of God, so far as can be outwardly discovered, and yet thrive not at all, as unto spiritual strength in their souls, is hard to be understood.

And, which is yet more astonishable, men abide in the duty of prayer, and that in constancy, in their families, and otherwise, and yet live in known sins. Whatever spiritual thoughts such men have in and by their prayers, they are not spiritually-minded. Shall we now say that all such persons are gross hypocrites; such as know they do but mock God and man; know that they have not desires nor aims after the things which they mention in their own prayers; but do these things either for some corrupt end, or at best to satisfy their convictions? Could we thus resolve, the whole difficulty of the case were taken off. For such double-minded men have no reason to think that they shall receive any thing of the Lord, as James speaks, chap. i. 7. Indeed they do not, They never act faith with reference unto their own prayers. But it is not so with all of this sort. Some judge themselves sincere, and in good earnest in their prayers, not without some hopes and expectations of success. I will not say of all such

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persons, that they are among the number of them concerning whom the wisdom of God says, 'Because I called unto them, and they refused; 'they shall call on me, but I will not answer, 'they shall seek me early and shall not find me,' Prov. i. 18, 19, 20, 21. And although we may say unto such persons in general, Either leave your sinning, or leave your praying, from Psal. l. 16, 17. and that with respect unto present scandal, and certain miscarriage in the end if both be continued in; yet in particular I would not advise any such person to leave off his praying until he had left his sin. This were to advise a sick man to use no remedies until he were well cured. Who knows but that the holy Spirit who works when and how he pleaseth, may take a time to animate these lifeless prayers, and make them a means of deliverance from the power of this sin. In the mean time the fault and guilt is wholly their own, who have effected a consistency between a way in sinning and a course in praying. And it ariseth from hence, that they have never laboured to fill up their requests with grace. What there hath been of earnestness or diligence in them, hath been from a force put upon them by their convictions and fears. For no man was ever absolutely prevail'd on by sin, who prayed for deliverance according to the mind of God. Every praying man that perisheth was an hypocrite. The faithfulness of God in his promises will not allow us to judge otherwise. Wherefore the thoughts that such persons have of spiritual things even in their duties, do not arise from with-

in, nor are a natural emanation of the frames of their hearts and affections.

Thirdly, Earnestness and appearing fervency in prayer, as unto the outward delivery of the words of it, yea, tho' the mind be so affected as to contribute much thereunto, will not of themselves prove, that the thoughts of men therein do arise from an internal spring of grace. There is a fervency of spirit in prayer, that is one of the best properties of it, being an earnest acting of love, faith and desire. But there is a fervency wherewith the mind itself may be affected, that may arise from other causes.

1. It may do so from the engagement of natural affections unto the object of their prayer, or the things prayed for. Men may be mighty earnest and intent in their minds, in praying for a dear relation, or for deliverance from eminent troubles, or imminent dangers; and yet all this fervour arise from the vehement actings of natural affections about the things prayed for, excited in an especial manner by the present duty. Hence God calls the earnest cries of some for temporal things, not a crying unto him, but an howling, Hos. vii. 14. That is, the cry of hungry ravenous beasts, that would be satisfied.

2. Sometimes it ariseth from the sharpness of convictions, which will make men even roar in their prayers for disquietment of heart. And this may be where there is no true grace as yet received, nor it may be, ever will be so. For the perplexing work of convictions, goes before real conversion; and as it produceth many other effects and

and changes in the mind, ſo it may do this of great fervency in vocal prayers, eſpecially if it be accompanied with outward afflictions, pains or troubles. Pſalm lxxviii. 34, 35.

3. Oft-times the mind and affections are very little concerned in that fervour and earneſtneſs which appear in the outward performance of the duty. But in the exerciſe of gifts and thro' their own utterance, men put their natural affections into ſuch an agitation, as ſhall carry out into a great vehemency in their expreſſions. It hath been ſo with ſundry perſons, who have been diſcovered to be rotten hypocrites, and have afterwards turned curſed apoſtates. Wherefore all theſe things may be, where there is no gracious ſpring, or vital principle, acting itſelf from within in ſpiritual thoughts.

Some it may be will deſign an advantage by their conceptions unto the intereſt of profaneneſs and ſcoffing. For if there may be theſe evils under the exerciſe of the gift of prayer, both in conſtancy, and with fervency; if there be a total want of the exerciſe of all true grace with it and under it; then it may be all that is pretended of this gift and its uſe, is but hypocriſy and talk. But I ſay, (1.) It may be as well pretended, that becauſe the ſun ſhining on a dung-hill, doth occaſion offenſive and noiſom ſteams, therefore all that is pretended of its influence on ſpices and flowers, cauſing them to give out their fragrancy, is utterly falſe. No man ever thought that ſpiritual gifts did change, or renew the minds and natures of men; where they are alone they only help

help and aſſiſt unto the uſeful exerciſe of natural faculties and powers. And therefore where the heart is not ſavingly renewed, no gifts can ſtir up a ſaving exerciſe of faith. But where it is ſo, they are a means to cauſe the ſavour of it to flow forth. (2.) Be it ſo that there may be ſome evils found under the exerciſe of the gift of prayer, what remedy for them may be propoſed? Is it that men ſhould renounce their uſe of it, and betake themſelves unto the reading of prayers only? 1. The ſame may be ſaid of all ſpiritual gifts whatever, for they are all of them liable unto abuſe. And ſhall we reject all the powers of the world to come, the whole complex of goſpel gifts, for the communication whereof the Lord Chriſt hath promiſed to continue his Spirit with his church unto the end of the world, becauſe by ſome they are abuſed? 2. Not only the ſame, but far greater evils may be found in and under the reading of prayers, which needs no further demonſtration than what it gives of itſelf every day. 3. It is hard to underſtand, how any benefit at all can accrue unto any by this relief, when the advantages of the other way are evident.

Wherefore the enquiry remains, how we may know unto our own ſatisfaction, that the thoughts we have of ſpiritual things in the duty of prayer, are from an internal fountain of grace, and ſo are an evidence that we are ſpiritually-minded, whereunto all theſe things do tend. Some few things I ſhall offer towards ſatisfaction herein.

1. I take it for granted on the evidence before given, that perſons who have any ſpiritual

light,

light, and will diligently examine and try their own hearts, will be able to discern what real actings of faith, of love, and delight in God, there are in their duties; and consequently what is the spring of their spiritual thoughts. In general we are assured, that 'he that believeth, hath the 'witness in himself,' 1 John. v. 10. Sincere faith will be its own evidence. And where there are sincere actings of faith, they will evidence themselves, if we try all things impartially by the word. But if men do, as for the most part they do, content themselves with the performance of any duty, without an examination of their principles, frames and actings of grace in them, it is no wonder if they walk in all uncertainty.

2. When the soul finds a sweet spiritual complacency in and after its duties, it is an evidence that grace hath been acted in its spiritual thoughts and desires. Jer. xxxi. The prophet receiveth a long gracious message from God, filled up with excellent promises and pathetical exhortations unto the church. The whole is as it were summ'd up in the close of it. ver. 25. 'For I have 'satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished 'every sorrowful soul.' Whereon the prophet adds, 'Upon this I awaked, and beheld, and 'my sleep was sweet unto me.' God's gracious message had so composed his spirits, and freed his mind from trouble, as that he was at quiet repose in himself, like a man asleep. But after the end of it, he stirrs up himself unto a review and consideration of what had been spoken unto him: 'I awaked and beheld,' or I stirred up my

myself, and considered what had been delivered unto me; and saith he, 'my sleep was sweet unto me;' I found a gracious complacency in, and refreshment unto my soul, from what I had heard and received. So is it oft-times with a soul that hath had real communion with God in the duty of prayer. It finds itself both in it, and afterwards when it is awakened unto the consideration of it, spiritually refreshed, it is sweet unto him.

This holy complacency, this rest and sweet repose of mind, is the foundation of the delight of believers in this duty. They do not pray only because it is their duty so to do, nor yet because they stand in need of it, so as that they cannot live without it, but they have delight in it; and to keep them from it, is all one as to keep them from their daily food and refreshment. Now we can have no delight in any thing but what we have found some sweetness, rest and complacency in. Without any such experience we may do or use any thing, but cannot do it with delight. And it ariseth, (1.) From the approach that is made unto God herein. It is in its own nature an access unto God on a throne of grace, Eph. ii. 18. Heb. x. 19, 20. And when this access is animated by the actings of grace, the soul hath a spiritual experience of a nearness in that approach. Now God is the fountain and center of all spiritual refreshment, rest and complacency: And in such an access unto him, there is a refreshing taste of them communicated unto the soul, Psal. xxxvi. 7, 8, 9. 'How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! 'there-

'therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: And thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light we shall see light.' God is proposed in the excellency of his loving-kindness, which is comprehensive of his goodness, grace and mercy. And so is he also as the spring of life and light, all spiritual powers and joys. Those that believe, are described by their trust under the shadow of his wings. In his worship, the fatness of his house, they make their approaches unto him. And the fruit hereof is, that he makes them to drink of the river of his pleasures, the satisfying, refreshing streams of his grace and goodness; they approach unto him as unto the fountain of life, so as to drink of that fountain, in renewed communications of life and grace; and in the light of God, the light of his countenance, to see light, in satisfying joy. In these things doth consist, and from them doth arise that spiritual complacency which the souls of believers do find in their duties. (2.) From the due exercise of faith, love and delight, the graces wherein the life of the new creature doth principally consist. There is a suitableness unto our natural constitution, and a secret complacency of our natures in the proper actings of life natural, for its own preservation and encrease. There is so in our spiritual constitution, in the proper actings of the powers of our spiritual life unto its preservation and encrease. These graces in their

due

due exercise, do compose and refresh the mind, as those which are perfective of its state, which quell and cast out whatever troubles it. Thence a blessed satisfaction and complacency befalls the soul. Herein 'he that believeth hath the 'witness in himself.' Besides, Faith and love are never really acted on Christ, but they prepare and make meet the soul to receive communications of love and grace from him; which it never faileth of, altho' it be not always sensible thereof. (3.) From the testimony of conscience, bearing witness unto our sincerity, both in aims, ends and performances of the duty. Hence a gracious repose of mind and great satisfactoriness doth ensue.

If we have no experience of these things, it is evident that we walk at random in the best of our duties; for they are among the principal things that we do or ought to pray for. And if we have not experience of the effects of our prayers in our hearts, we neither have advantage by them, nor give glory unto God in them.

But yet here, as in most other spiritual things, one of the worst of vices is ready to impose itself in the room and place of the best of graces. And this is, self-pleasing in the performance of the duty. This instead of a grace steeped in humility, as all true grace is, is a vile effect of spiritual pride, or the offering of a sacrifice unto our own net and drag. It is a glorying in the flesh; for whatever of self any doth glory in, it is but flesh. When men have had enlargements in their expressions, and especially when they apprehend that others are satisfied or affected therewith, they

are apt to have a secret self-pleasing in what they have done, which before they are aware turns into pride and a noxious elation of mind. The same may befall men in their most secret duties, performed outwardly by the aid of spiritual gifts. But this is most remote from and contrary unto that spiritual complacency in duty which we speak of, which yet it will pretend unto, untill it be diligently examined. The language of this spiritual complacency is, 'I will go in the strength 'of the Lord God, I will make mention of thy 'righteousness, of thine only,' Psal. lxxi. 16. That of spiritual pride is; 'God, I thank thee 'that I have done thus and thus;' as it was expressed by the Pharisee. That is in God alone, this is in self. That draws forth the savour of all graces: This immediately covereth and buries them all, if there be any in the soul. That fills the soul eminently with humility and self-abasement; this with a lifting up of the mind, and proud self-conceit. That casts out all remembrance of what we have done ourselves, retaining only a sense of what we have received from God, of the impressions of his love and grace. This blots out all remembrance of what we have freely received from God, and retains only what we have done ourselves. Wherever it is, there is no due sense either of the greatness or goodness of God.

Some it may be will say, that if it be so, they for their parts are cut off. They have no experience of any such spiritual rest and complacency in God in or after their prayers. At the best they

they begin them with tears and end them in sorrow; and sometimes they know not what is become of them, but fear that God is not glorified by them, nor their own souls bettered.

I answer, (1.) There is great spiritual refreshment in that godly sorrow which is at work in our prayers. Where the holy Ghost is a Spirit of grace and supplication, he causeth mourning, and in that mourning there is joy. (2.) The secret encouragement which we receive by praying, to adhere unto God constantly in prayer, ariseth from some experience of this holy complacency, tho' we have not a sensible evidence of it. (3.) Perhaps some of them who make this complaint, if they would awaken and consider, will find that their souls, at least sometimes, have been thus refreshed, and brought unto an holy rest in God. (4.) Then shall ye know the Lord, if you follow on to know him. Abide in seeking after this complacency and satisfaction in God, and you shall attain it.

3. It is a sure evidence that our thoughts of spiritual things in our supplications are from an internal spring of grace, and are not merely occasioned by the duty itself, when we find the daily fruit and advantage of them; especially in the preservation of our souls in an holy, humble, watchful frame.

Innumerable are the advantages, benefits and effects of prayer; which are commonly spoken unto. Growth in grace and consolation is the substance of them. Where there is continuance in prayer, there will be spiritual growth in some

proportion. For men to be earnest in prayer and thriftless in grace, is a certain indication of prevalent corruptions, and want of being spiritually-minded in prayer itself. If a man eats his daily food, let him eat never so much, or so often, if he be not nourished by it, his body is under the power of prevalent distempers. And so is his spiritual constitution, who thriveth not in the use of the food of the new creature. But that which I fix upon with respect unto the present enquiry, is the frame that it preserves the soul in. It will keep it humble and upon a diligent watch as unto its dispositions and actings. He who prays as he ought, will endeavour to live as he prays. This none can do who doth not with diligence keep his heart unto the things he hath prayed about. To pray earnestly and live carelesly, is to proclaim that a man is not spiritually-minded in his prayer. Hereby then we shall know what is the spring of those spiritual thoughts, which our minds are exercised withal in our supplications. If they are influenced unto a constant daily watch for the preservation of that frame of spirit, those dispositions and inclinations unto spiritual things which we pray for, they are from an internal spring of grace. If there be generally an unsuitableness in our minds unto what we seem to contend for in our prayers, the gift may be in exercise, but the grace is wanting. If a man be every day on the exchange, and there talketh diligently and earnestly about merchandize and the affairs of trade, but when he comes home, thinks no more of them, because indeed he

he hath nothing to do, no intereſt in them, he may be a very poor man notwithſtanding his pretences. And he may be ſpiritually very poor who is on occaſions fervent in prayer, if when he retires unto himſelf, he is not careful and diligent about the matter of it.

4. When ſpiritual affections and due preparation of heart unto the duty do excite and animate the gift of prayer, and not the gift make impreſſions on the affections, then are we ſpiritually-minded therein. Gifts are ſervants, not rulers in the mind; are beſtowed on us to be ſerviceable unto grace, not to lead it, but to follow it, and to be ready with their aſſiſtance on its exerciſe. For the moſt part where they lead all, they are all alone. This is the natural order of theſe things. Grace habitually inclineth and diſpoſeth the heart unto this duty. Providence and rule gives the occaſions for its exerciſe: Senſe of duty calls for preparation. Grace coming into actual exerciſe, Gifts come in with their aſſiſtance. If they lead all, all is out of order. It may be otherwiſe ſometimes. A perſon indiſpos'd and lifeleſs, ingaging into prayer in a way of obedience, upon conviction of duty, may in and by the gift have his affections excited, and graces engaged unto its proper work. It may be ſo, I ſay; but let men take heed how they truſt unto this order and method. For where it is ſo, there may be little or nothing of the exerciſe of true grace in all their fervour and commotion of affections. But when the genuine actings of faith, love, holy reverence and gracious deſires, do ſtir up the gift unto its

exerciſe, calling in its aſſiſtance unto the expreſſion of themſelves, then are the heart and mind in their proper order.

5. It is ſo when other duties of religion are equally regarded and attended unto with prayer itſelf. He, all whoſe religion lies in prayer and hearing, hath none at all. God hath an equal reſpect unto all other duties, and ſo muſt we have alſo. So it is expreſſed as unto the inſtance of alms; Acts x. 31. And James placeth all religion herein, becauſe there is none without it; Jam. i. 27. I ſhall not value his prayers at all, be he never ſo earneſt and frequent in them, who gives not alms according to his ability. And this in an eſpecial manner is required of us who are miniſters; that we be not like an hand ſet up in croſs ways, directing others which way to go, but ſtaying behind itſelf.

This digreſſion about the riſe and ſpring of ſpiritual thoughts in prayer, I judged not unneceſſary, in ſuch a time and ſeaſon wherein we ought to be very jealous, leſt gifts impoſe themſelves in the room of grace, and be careful that they are employed only unto their proper end, which is to be ſerviceable unto grace in its exerciſe, and not otherwiſe.

3. There is another occaſion of thoughts of ſpiritual things, when they do not ſpring from a living principle within, and ſo are no evidence of being ſpiritually-minded. And this is the diſcourſe of others. 'They that fear the Lord will 'be ſpeaking one to another,' of the things wherein his glory is concerned, Mal. iii. 16. To

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declare the righteousness, the glory of God, is the delight of his saints. Psal. cxlv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be 'praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One 'generation shall praise thy works to another, and 'shall declare thy mighty works. I will speak 'of the glorious honour of thy Majesty, and of 'thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of 'the might of thy terrible acts; and I will de-'clare thy greatness. They shall abundantly ut-'ter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall 'sing of thy righteousness. The Lord is graci-'ous and full of compassion, slow to anger and 'of great mercy.' And accordingly there are some who are ready on all occasions to be speaking or making mention of things divine, spiritual and holy, and it is to be wished that there were more of them. All the flagitious sins that the world is filled withal, are not a greater evidence of the degeneracy of Christian religion, than this is, that it is grown unusual, yea, a shame or scorn for men to speak together of the things of God. It was not so when religion was in its primitive power and glory; nor is it so with them who really fear God, and are sensible of their duty. Some I say there are who embrace all occasions of spiritual communication. Those with whom they do converse, if they are not profligate, if they have any spiritual light, cannot but so far comply with what they say, as to think of the things spoken which are spiritual. Oft-times the track and course of mens thoughts, lie so out of the way, are so contrary unto such things, that they seem strange un-

to them, they give them no entertainment. You do but cross their way with such discourses, whereon they stand still a little and so pass on. Even the countenances of some men will change hereon, and they betake themselves unto an unsatisfied silence, until they can divert unto other things. Some will make such replies of empty words, as shall evidence their hearts to be far enough estranged from the things proposed unto them. But with others, such occasional discourses will make such impressions on their minds, as to stir up present thoughts of spiritual things. But tho' frequent occasions hereof may be renewed, yet will such thoughts give no evidence that any man is spiritually-minded. For they are not genuine, from an internal spring of grace.

From these causes it is, that the thoughts of spiritual things are with many, as guests that come into an inn, and not like children that dwell in the house. They enter occasionally, and then there is a great stir about them, to provide meet entertainment for them. Within a while they are disposed of, and so depart unto their own occasions, being neither lookt nor enquired after any more. Things of another nature are attended unto; new occasions bring in new guests for a season. Children are owned in the house, are missed if they are out of the way, and have their daily provision constantly made for them. So is it with these occasional thoughts about spiritual things. By one means or other they enter into the mind, and there are entertained for a season. On a sudden they depart, and men hear of them

no more. But those that are natural and genuine, arising from a living spring of grace in the heart, disposing the mind unto them, are as the children of the house; they are expected in their places and at their seasons. If they are missing, they are enquired after. The heart calls itself unto an account whence it is that it hath been so long without them, and calls them over into its wonted converse with them.

## CHAP. IV.

*Other Evidences of Thoughts about Spiritual things, arising from an Internal Principle of Grace, whereby they are an Evidence of our being spiritually-minded. The abounding of these Thoughts, how far, and wherein such an Evidence.*

II. THE second evidence that our thoughts of spiritual things do proceed from an internal fountain of sanctified light and actions, or that they are acts or fruits of our being spiritually-minded, is, that they abound in us, that our minds are filled with them. We may say of them as the apostle doth of other graces; 'If 'these things are in you and abound, you shall 'not be barren.' It is well indeed, when our minds are like the land of Egypt in the years of plenty, when it brought forth by handfuls; when they

they flow from the well of living water in us with a full stream and current. But there is a measure of abounding, which is necessary to evidence our being spiritually-minded in them.

There is a double effect ascribed here unto this frame of spirit; First, Life, and then peace. The nature and being of this grace depends on the former consideration of it, namely, Its procedure from an internal principle of grace, the effect and consequence whereof is life. But that it is peace also, depends on this degree and measure of the actings of this part of it in our spiritual thoughts. And this we must consider.

It is the character of all men in the state of depraved nature and apostasy from God, 'That 'every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts, 'is only evil continually,' Gen. vi. 5. All persons in that condition are not swearers, blasphemers, drunkards, adulterers, idolaters, or the like. These are the vices of particular persons, the effects of particular constitutions and temptations. But thus it is with them, all and every one of them, 'All the imaginations of the thoughts of 'their hearts are evil, and that continually.' Some as unto the matter of them, some as unto their end, all as unto their principle; for out of the evil treasure of the heart can proceed nothing but what is evil. That infinite multitude of open sins which is in the world, doth give a clear prospect or representation of the nature and effects of our apostasy from God. But he that can consider the numberless number of thoughts which pass thro' the minds of every individual person every day, all

all evil, and that continually, he will have a farther comprehension of it.

We can therefore have no greater evidence of a change in us from this ſtate and condition, than a change wrought in the courſe of our thoughts. A relinquiſhment of this or that particular ſin, is not an evidence of a tranſlation from this ſtate. For as was ſaid, ſuch particular ſins proceed from particular luſts and temptations, and are not the immediate univerſal conſequence of that depravation of nature which is equal in all. Such alone is the vanity and wickedneſs of the thoughts and imaginations of the heart. A change herein is a bleſſed evidence of a change of ſtate. He who is cured of a dropſy, is not immediately healthy, becauſe he may have the prevailing ſeeds and matter of other diſeaſes in him, and the next day die of a lethargy: But he who from a ſtate of ſickneſs, is reſtored in the temperature of the maſs of blood and the animal ſpirits, and all the principles of life and health, unto a good craſis and temperature, his ſtate of body is changed. The cure of a particular ſin may leave behind it the ſeeds of eternal death, which they may quickly effect. But he who hath obtained a change in this character which belongs eſſentially unto the ſtate of depraved nature, is ſpiritually recovered. And the more the ſtream of our thoughts is turned, the more our minds are filled with thoſe of a contrary nature, the greater and more firm is our evidence of a tranſlation out of that depraved ſtate and condition.

There is nothing ſo unaccountable as the multiplicity

tiplicity of thoughts of the minds of men. They fall from them like the leaves of trees, when they are shaken with the wind in Autumn. To have all these thoughts, all the several figments of the heart, all the conceptions that are framed and agitated in the mind, to be evil and that continually, what an hell of horrour and confusion must it needs be? A deliverance from this loathsom hateful state, is more to be valued than the whole world. Without it neither life nor peace, nor immortality, or glory, can ever be attained.

The design of conviction is to put a stop unto these thoughts, to take off from their number, and thereby to lessen their guilt. It deserves not the name of conviction of sin, which respects only outward actions, and regards not the inward actings of the mind. And this alone will for a season make a great change in the thoughts, especially it will do so when assisted by superstition directing them unto other objects. These two in conjunction are the rise of all that devotional religion which is in the Papacy. Conviction labours to put some stop and bounds unto thoughts absolutely evil and corrupt; and superstition suggests other objects for them, which they readily embrace; but it is a vain attempt. The minds and hearts of men are continually minting and coining new thoughts and imaginations. The cogitative faculty is always at work. As the streams of a mighty river running into the ocean, so are the thoughts of a natural man, and thro' self they run into hell. It is a fond thing to set a damm before such a river, to curb its streams.

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For a little ſpace there may be a ſtop made, but it will quickly break down all obſtacles, or overflow all its bounds. There is no way to divert its courſe, but only by providing other channels for its waters, and turning them thereinto. The mighty ſtream of the evil thoughts of men will admit of no bounds or damms to put a ſtop unto them. There are but two ways of relief from them; the one reſpecting their moral evil, the other their natural abundance. The firſt by throwing ſalt into the ſpring, as Eliſha cured the waters of Jericho; that is, to get the heart and mind ſeaſoned with grace; for the tree muſt be made good before the fruit will be ſo. The other is, to turn their ſtreams into new channels, putting new aims and ends upon them, fixing them on new objects; ſo ſhall we abound in ſpiritual thoughts; for abound in thoughts we ſhall whether we will or no.

To this purpoſe is the advice of the apoſtle, Epheſ. v. 18, 19. ‘ And be not drunk with wine ‘ wherein is exceſs, but be filled with the ſpirit, ‘ ſpeaking to yourſelves in pſalms and hymns and ‘ ſpiritual ſongs.’ When men are drunk with wine unto an exceſs, they make it quickly evident, what vain, fooliſh, ridiculous imaginations it filleth their minds withal. In oppoſition hereunto, the apoſtle adviſeth believers to be filled with the Spirit, to labour for ſuch a participation of him as may fill their minds and hearts, as others fill themſelves with wine. To what end, unto what purpoſe ſhould they deſire ſuch a participation of him, to be ſo filled with him? It is unto this end, namely,

ly, That he by his grace may fill them with holy ſpiritual thoughts, as on the contrary men drunk unto an exceſs, are filled with thoſe that are fooliſh, vain and wicked. So the words of v. 19. do declare, for he adviſeth us to expreſs our abounding thoughts, in ſuch duties as will give an eſpecial vent unto them.

Wherefore, when we are ſpiritually-minded, we ſhall abound in ſpiritual thoughts, or thoughts of ſpiritual things. That we have ſuch thoughts will not ſufficiently evidence that we are ſo, unleſs we abound in them. And this leads us unto the principal enquiry on this head; namely, what meaſure we ought to aſſign hereof, how we may know when we abound in ſpiritual thoughts, ſo as that they may be an evidence of our being ſpiritually-minded.

I anſwer in general, among other ſcriptures, read over Pſal. cxix. with underſtanding. Conſider therein what David expreſſeth of himſelf, as unto his conſtant delight in, and continual thoughts of the law of God, which was the only means of Divine revelation at that ſeaſon. Try yourſelves by that pattern; examine yourſelves whether you can truly ſpeak the ſame words with him; at leaſt if not in the ſame degree of zeal, yet with the ſame ſincerity of grace. You will ſay, that was David. It is not for us, it is not our duty to be like unto him, at leaſt not to be equal with him. But as far as I know, we muſt be like him, if ever we intend to come to the place where he is. It will ruin our ſouls, if when we read in the ſcripture, how the ſaints of

God

God expreſs their experience in faith, love, delight in God and conſtant meditations on him, we grant that it was ſo with them, that they were good and holy men, but it is not neceſſary that it ſhould be ſo with us. Theſe things are not written in the ſcripture to ſhew what they were, but what we ought to be. All things concerning them were written for admonition; 1 Cor. x. 11. And if we have not the ſame delight in God as they had, the ſame ſpiritual-mindedneſs in thoughts and meditations of heavenly things, we can have no evidence that we pleaſe God as they did, or ſhall go to that place whither they are gone. Profeſſion of the life of God paſſeth with many at a very low and eaſie rate. Their thoughts are for the moſt part vain and earthly, their communication unſavoury, and ſometimes corrupt, their lives at beſt uneven and uncertain, as unto the rule of obedience; yet all is well, all is life and peace. The holy men of old, who obtained this teſtimony, that they pleaſed God, did not ſo walk before him. They meditated continually in the law; thought of God in the night ſeaſons; ſpake of his ways, his works, his praiſe; their whole delight was in him, and in all things they followed hard after him. It is the example of David in particular that I have propoſed. And it is a promiſe of the grace to be adminiſtred by the goſpel, that he 'who is feeble ſhall be as David,' Zech. xii. 8. And if we are not ſo in his being ſpiritually-minded, it is to be feared we are not partakers of the promiſe. But that we may the better judge

judge of ourselves therein, I shall add some few rules unto this direction by example.

I. Consider, what proportion your thoughts of spiritual things bears with those about other things. Our principal interest and concern, as we profess, lies in things spiritual, heavenly and eternal. Is it not then a foolish thing to suppose that our thoughts about these things, should not hold some proportion with those about other things, nay that they should not exceed them? No man is so vain in earthly things, as to pretend that his principal concern lieth in that whereof he thinks very seldom in comparison of other things. It is not so with men in reference unto their families, their trades, their occasions of life. It is a truth not only consecrated by the testimony of him who is truth, but evident also in the light of reason, 'That where our treasure 'is there will our hearts be also.' And the affections of our hearts do act themselves by the thoughts of our minds. Wherefore, if our principal treasure be as we profess, in things spiritual and heavenly, and wo unto us if it be not so, on them will our affections and consequently our desires and thoughts be principally fixed.

That we may the better examine ourselves by this rule, we must consider of what sorts mens other thoughts are; and as unto our present purpose, they may be reduced unto these heads.

1. There are such as are exercised about their callings and lawful occasions. These are numberless and endless; especially among a sort of men who rise early and go to bed late, and eat the

the bread of carefulness, or are particularly industrious and diligent in their ways. These thoughts men approve themselves in, and judge them their duty, as they are, in their proper place and measure. But no heart can conceive the multitude of these thoughts, which partly in contrivances, partly in converse, are engaged and spent about these things. And the more men are immersed in them, the more do themselves and others esteem them diligent and praise-worthy. And there are some who have neither necessity nor occasion to be engaged much in the duties of any especial calling, who yet by their words and actions declare themselves to be confined almost in their thoughts unto themselves, their relations, their children, and their self concerns, which though most of them are very impertinent, yet they justify themselves in them. All sorts may do well to examine what proportion their thoughts of spiritual things do bear unto those of other things: I fear with most it will be found to be very small, with many next to none at all. What evidence then can they have that they are spiritually-minded, that their principal interest lies in things above? It may be it will be asked, Whether it be necessary that men should think as much and as often about things spiritual and heavenly, as they do about the lawful affairs of their callings? I say more, and more often, if we are what we profess ourselves to be. Generally it is the best sort of men, as to the things of God and man, who are busied in their callings, some of one sort, some of another. But even a-

mong the best of these, many will continually spend the strength of their minds and vigour of their spirits, about their affairs all the day long; and so they can pray in the morning and evening, with some thoughts sometimes of spiritual things occasionally administred, do suppose they acquit themselves very well. As if a man should pretend that his great design is to prepare himself for a voyage unto a far country, where is his patrimony and his inheritance: But all his thoughts and contrivances are about some few trifles, which if indeed he intend his voyage he must leave behind him; and of his main design he scarce thinketh at all. We all profess that we are bound for heaven, immortality, and glory: But is it any evidence we really design it, if all our thoughts are consumed about the trifles of this world, which we must leave behind us, and have only occasional thoughts of things above? I shall elswhere shew, if God will, How men may be spiritually-minded in their earthly affairs. If some relief may not be thence obtained, I cannot tell what to say or answer for them, whose thoughts of spiritual things do not hold proportion with, yea, exceed them which they lay out about their callings.

This whole rule is grounded on that of our Saviour, Mat. vi. 31, 32, 33, 34. 'Take no 'thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what 'shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be 'cloathed? But seek first the kingdom of God, 'and his righteousness, and all these things shall 'be added unto you. Take therefore no thought

'for

'for to-morrow.' When we have done all we can, when we have made the best of them we are able, all earthly things, as unto our Interest in them, amount to no more, but 'what we eat, 'what we drink, and wherewith we are cloathed.' About these things our Saviour forbids us to take any thought, not absolutely, but with a double limitation. As first, That we take no such thought about them, as should carry along with it a disquietment of mind, thro' a distrust of the fatherly care and providence of God. This is the design of the context. Secondly, No thought that for constancy and ingagement of spirit, should be like unto those which we ought to have about spiritual things. 'Seek first the kingdom of God 'and his righteousness.' Let that be the chief and principal thing in your thoughts and consciences. We may therefore conclude, that at least they must hold an exceeding proportion with them.

Let a man industriously engaged in the way of his calling, try himself by this rule every evening. Let him consider what have been his thoughts about his earthly occasions, and what about spiritual things; and thereon ask of himself whether he be spiritually-minded or no. Be not deceived; 'as a man thinketh so is he.' And if we account it a strange thing, that our thoughts should be more exercised about spiritual things, than about the affairs of our callings, we must not think it strange if when we come to the trial, we cannot find that we have either life or peace.

Moreover it is known, how often when we are

engaged in ſpiritual duties, other thoughts will interpoſe, and impoſe themſelves on our minds. Thoſe which are about mens ſecular concernments will do ſo. The world will frequently make an inroad on the ways to heaven, to diſturb the paſſengers and wayfaring men. There is nothing more frequenly complained of, by ſuch as are awake unto their duty, and ſenſible of their weakneſs. Call to mind therefore, how often on the other hand ſpiritual thoughts do interpoſe, and as it were impoſe themſelves on your minds, whilſt you are engaged in your earthly affairs. Sometimes, no doubt, but with all that are true believers it is ſo. 'Or ever I was aware,' ſaith the ſpouſe, 'my ſoul made me as the chariots 'of Amminadab,' Cant. vi. 12. Grace in her own ſoul ſurpriſed her into a ready willing frame unto ſpiritual communion with Chriſt, when ſhe was intent on other occaſions. But if theſe thoughts of heavenly things ſo ariſing in us, bear no proportion with the other ſort, it is an evidence what frame and principle is predominant in us.

2. There are a multitude of thoughts in the minds of men, which are vain, uſeleſs, and altogether unprofitable. Theſe ordinarily through a dangerous miſtake are looked on as not ſinful, becauſe, as it is ſuppoſed, the matter of them is not ſo. And therefore men rather ſhake them off for their folly, than their guilt. But they ariſe from a corrupt fountain, and wofully pollute both the mind and conſcience. Wherever there are vain thoughts there is ſin. Jer. iv. 14. Such are thoſe numberleſs imaginations, whereby men fancy them-

themſelves to be what they are not, to do what they do not, to enjoy what they enjoy not, to diſpoſe of themſelves and others, at their pleaſure. That our nature is liable unto ſuch a pernicious folly, which ſome of tenacious fancies have turned into madneſs; we are beholden alone to our accurſed apoſtaſy from God, and the vanity that poſſeſſed our minds thereon. Hence the prince of Tyrus thought he was a God, and ſat in the ſeat of God, Ezek. xxviii. 2. So it hath been with others; and in thoſe, in whom ſuch imaginations are kept unto ſome better order and bounds, yet being traced unto their original, they will be found to ſpring ſome of them immediately from pride, ſome from ſenſual luſts, ſome from the love of the world, all from ſelf, and the old ambition to be as God, to diſpoſe of all things as we think meet. I know no greater miſery or puniſhment in this world, than the debaſing of our nature to ſuch vain imaginations; and a perfect freedom from them is a part of the bleſſedneſs of heaven. It is not my preſent work to ſhew how ſinful they are, let them be eſteemed only fruitleſs, fooliſh, vain and ludicrous. But let men examine themſelves, what number of theſe vain uſeleſs thoughts, night and day, do roave up and down in their minds. If now it be apprehended too ſevere, that mens thoughts of ſpiritual things ſhould exceed them that are employed about their lawful callings, let them conſider what proportion they bear unto thoſe which are altogether vain and uſeleſs: Do not many give more time unto them, than they do unto holy meditations, without an endeavour

to mortify the one, or to stir up and enliven the other? Are they not more wonted to their seasons, than holy thoughts are? And shall we suppose that those with whom it is so, are spiritually-minded?

3. There are thoughts that are formally evil; they are so in their own nature, being corrupt contrivances 'to fulfil the desires of the flesh in 'the lusts thereof.' These also will attempt the minds of believers. But they are always looked on as professed enemies to the soul, and are watched against. I shall not therefore make any comparison between them and spiritual thoughts, for they abound only in them that are carnally-minded.

II. The second rule to this purpose is, That we would consider, whether thoughts of spiritual things do constantly take possession of their proper seasons. There are some times and seasons in the course of mens lives, wherein they retire themselves unto their own thoughts. The most busied men in the world have some times of thinking unto themselves. And those who design no such thing, as being afraid of coming to be wiser or better than they are, do yet spend time therein whether they will or no. But they who are wise will be at home as much as they can, and have as many seasons for such their retirements as is possible for them to attain. If that man be foolish who busieth himself so much abroad in the concerns of others, that he hath no time to consider the state of his own house and family; much more is he so, who spendeth all his thoughts about other things, and never

never makes uſe of them in an enquiry, how it is with himſelf and his own ſoul. However men can hardly avoid, but that they muſt have ſome ſeaſons, partly ſtated, partly occaſional, wherein they entertain themſelves with their own thoughts: The evening and the morning, the times of waking on the bed, thoſe of the neceſſary ceſſation of all ordinary affairs, of walking, journeying, and the like, are ſuch ſeaſons.

If we are ſpiritually-minded, if thoughts of ſpiritual things do abound in us, they will ordinarily, and that with conſtancy, poſſeſs theſe ſeaſons, look upon them as thoſe which are their due, which belong unto them. For they are expreſly aſſigned unto them in the way of rule, expreſſed in examples and commands. See Pſal. xvi. 7, 8. Pſal xcii. 2. Deut. vi. 7. If they are uſually given up unto other ends and occaſions, are poſſeſſed with thoughts of another nature, it is an open evidence that ſpiritual thoughts have but little intereſt in our minds, little prevalency in the conduct of our ſouls. It is our duty to afford unto them ſtated times taken away from other affairs that call for them. But if inſtead thereof we rob them of what is as it were their own, which no other things or buſineſs can lay any juſt claim unto, how dwelleth the love of ſpiritual things in us? Moſt profeſſors are convinced that it is their duty to pray morning and evening, and it is to be wiſhed that they were all found in the practice of it. But if ordinarily they judge themſelves, in the performance of that duty, to be diſcharged from any further exerciſe of ſpiritual

thoughts, applying them unto things worldly, uſeleſs, or vain, they can make no pretence to be ſpiritually-minded.

And it muſt be obſerved, which will be found to be true, that if the ſeaſons which are as it were due unto ſuch meditations be taken from them, they will be the worſt employed of all the minutes of our lives. Vain and fooliſh thoughts, corrupt imaginations, will make a common haunt unto the minds of men in them, and habituate themſelves unto an expectation of entertainment; whence they will grow importunate for admiſſion. Hence, with many, thoſe precious moments of time which might greatly influence their ſouls unto life and peace, if they were indeed ſpiritually-minded, make the greateſt proviſion for their trouble, ſorrow and confuſion. For the vain and evil thoughts which ſome perſons do accuſtom themſelves unto in ſuch ſeaſons, are or ought to be a burden upon their conſciences more than they can bear. That which providence tenders unto their good is turned into a ſnare; and God doth righteouſly leave them unto the fruits of their own folly, who ſo deſpiſe his gracious proviſion for their good. If we cannot afford unto God our ſpare time, it is evident that indeed we can afford nothing at all. Micah ii. 1. 'They deviſe iniquity upon their beds.' The ſeaſons proper for holy contemplation, they make uſe of to fill their minds with wicked imaginations, 'And when the morning is light they practiſe it;' walking all day on all occaſions, ſuitably unto their devices and imaginations of the night. Many will have cauſe

cause to complain unto eternity, of those leasure times which might have been improv'd for their advantage unto eternal blessedness.

If we intend therefore to maintain a title unto this grace of being spiritually-minded, if we would have any evidence of it in ourselves, without which we can have none of life or peace, and what we pretend thereof is but an effect of security, we must endeavour to preserve the claim and right of spiritual thoughts unto such seasons, and actually put them in possession of them.

3. Consider how we are affected with our disappointments about these seasons. Have we by negligence, by temptations, have we by occasional diversions or affairs of life been taken off from thoughts of God, of Christ, of heavenly things, when we ought to have been engaged in them; how are we affected with a review hereof? A carnal mind is well enough satisfied with the omission of any duty, so it have the pretence of a necessary occasion. If it hath lost a temporal advantage, thro' attendance unto a spiritual duty, it will deeply reflect on itself, and it may be, like the duty the worse afterwards. But a gracious soul, one that is truly spiritually-minded, will mourn under a review of such omissions, and by every one of them is stirred up unto more watchfulness for the future. Alas, will it say, how little have I been with Christ this day? How much time hath passed me without a thought of him? How foolish was I, to be wanting to such or such an opportunity? I am in arrears unto myself, and have no rest until I be satisfied.

I ſay, if indeed we are ſpiritually-minded, we will duly and carefully call over the conſiderati-on of thoſe times and ſeaſons, wherein we ought to have exerciſed ourſelves in ſpiritual thoughts; and if we have loſt them, or any of them, mourn over our own negligence. But if we can omit and loſe ſuch ſeaſons or opportunities, from time to time, without regret or ſelf-reflections, it is to be fear'd that we wax worſe and worſe. Way will be made hereby for omiſſions, until we grow wholly cold about them.

And indeed that woful loſs of time that is found amongſt many profeſſors, is greatly to be be-wail'd. Some loſe it on themſelves, by a continu-al track of fruitleſs impertinent thoughts about their own concerns. Some in vain converſe with others, wherein for the moſt part they edify one another unto vanity. How much of this time might, nay, ought to be redeemed for holy me-ditations? The good Lord make all profeſſors ſenſible of their loſs of former ſeaſons, that they may be the more watchful for the future, in this great concernment of their ſouls. Little do ſome think what light, what aſſurance, what joy, what readineſs for the croſs or for heaven, they might have attained, had they laid hold on all juſt ſea-ſons of exerciſing their thoughts about ſpiritual things which they have enjoyed, who now are at a loſs in all, and ſurprized with every fear or diffi-culty that doth befal them.

This is the firſt thing that belongs unto our being ſpiritually-minded; for altho' it doth not abſolutely or eſſentially conſiſt therein, yet it is in-

inseparable from it, and the most undeceiving indication of it. And thus of abounding and abiding in thoughts about spiritual things, such as arise and spring naturally from a living principle, a spiritual frame and disposition of heart within.

## CHAP. V.

*The objects of Spiritual Thoughts, or what they are conversant about, evidencing them in whom they are to be spiritually-minded. Rules directing unto steadiness in the Contemplation of Heavenly things. Motives to fix our Thoughts with steadiness in them.*

BEfore I proceed unto the next general head, and which is the principal thing, the foundation of the grace and duty enquired after, some things must be spoken to render what hath been already insisted on, yet more particularly useful. And this is, To enquire what are, and what ought to be the special objects of those thoughts, which under the qualifications laid down, are the evidences of our being spiritually-minded. And it may be, we may be useful unto many herein, by helping of them to fix their minds, which are apt to rove into all uncertainty. For this is befallen us thro' the disorder and weakness of the faculties of our souls, that sometimes what the mind guides, leads and directs unto, in things spiritual

ritual and heavenly, our wills and affections thro' their depravation and corruption will not comply withal, and so the good designings of the mind are lost. Sometimes what the will and affections are inclin'd unto and ready for, the mind thro' its weakness and inconstancy, cannot lead them to the accomplishment of; 'So to will is present 'with us, but how to perform that will we know 'not.' So, many are barren in this duty, because they know not what to fix upon, nor how to exercise their thoughts when they have chosen a subject for their meditations. Hence they spend their time in fruitless desires that they could use their thoughts unto more purpose, rather than make any progress in the duty itself. They tire themselves not because they are not willing to go, but because they cannot find their way. Wherefore both these things shall be spoken unto; both what are proper objects of our spiritual thoughts, and how we may be steady in our contemplations of them. And I shall unto this purpose, First, Give some general rules, And then, Some particular instances in way of direction.

1. Observe the especial calls of providence, and apply your minds unto thoughts of the duties required in them and by them. There is a voice in all signal dispensations of providence. 'The voice of the Lord crieth unto the city, the 'men of wisdom shall see thy name; hear ye the 'rod, and who hath appointed it,' Mic. vi. 9. There is a call, a cry in every rod of God, in every chastising providence; and therein he makes a declaration of his name, his holiness, his power,
his

his greatness. This every wise substantial man will labour to discern, and so comply with the call. God is greatly provoked when it is otherwise. 'Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they 'will not see, but they shall see, and be ashamed,' Isa. xxvi. 11. If therefore we would apply ourselves unto our present duty, we are wisely to consider what is the voice of God, in his present providential dispensations in the world. Hearken not unto any who would give another interpretation of them, but that they are plain declarations of his displeasure and indignation against the sins of men. Is not 'his wrath in them re-'vealed from heaven against the ungodliness of 'men,' especially such as detain the truth in unrighteousness, or false hypocritical professors of the gospel? Doth he not also signally declare the uncertainty and instability of earthly enjoyments, from life itself to a shoe-latchet? As also, how vain and foolish it is to adhere inordinately unto them. The fingers that appeared writing on the wall the doom of Belshazzar, did it in characters that none read, and words that none could understand but Daniel: But the present call of God in these things is made plain upon tables, that he may run who readeth it. If the heavens gather blackness with clouds, and it thunder over us, if any that are on their journey will not believe that there is a storm a-coming, they must bear the severity of it.

Suppose then this to be the voice of providence, suppose there be in it these indications of the mind and will of God, what are the duties that

that we are called unto thereby? They may be referred unto two heads:

1. A diligent search into ourselves, and an holy watch over ourselves, with respect unto those ways and sins which the displeasure of God is declared against. That present providences are indications of God's anger and displeasure, we take for granted. But when this is done, the most are apt to cast the causes of them on others, and to excuse themselves; so long as they see others more wicked and profligate than themselves, openly guilty of such crimes, as they abhor the thoughts of, they cast all the wrath on them, and fear nothing but that they shall suffer with them. But alas! When the storm came on the ship at sea, wherein there was but one person that feared God; upon an enquiry for whose sake it came, the lot fell on him, Jonah i. 7. The cause of the present storm, may as well be the secret sins of professors, as the open provocations of ungodly men. God will punish severely those which he hath known, Amos iii. 2. It is therefore certainly our duty to search diligently, that nothing be found resting in us, against which God is declaring his displeasure. Take heed of negligence and security herein. When our Saviour foretold his disciples, that one of them should betray him, he who alone was guilty, was the last that said, 'Master is it I.' Let no ground of hopes you have of your spiritual condition and acceptance with God, no sense of your sincerity in any of your duties, no visible difference between you and others in the world, im-

impose themselves on your minds to divert them from diligence in this duty; 'The voice of the 'Lord crieth unto the city, and the man of wis'dom will see his name.'

2. A diligent endeavour to live in an holy resignation of our persons, our lives, our families, all our enjoyments, unto the sovereign will and wisdom of God; so as that we may be in a readiness to part with all things upon his call without repining. This also is plainly declared in the voice of present providences. God is making wings for mens riches, he is shaking their habitations, taking away the visible defences of their lives, proclaiming the instability and uncertainty of all things here below: And if we are not minded to contend with him, we have nothing left to give us rest and peace for a moment, but an holy resignation of all unto his sovereign pleasure.

Would you now know what you should fix and exercise your thoughts upon, so as that they may be evidences of your being spiritually-minded? I say, be frequently conversant in them about these things. They ly before you, they call upon you, and will find you a just employment. Count them part of your business, allow them some part of your time, cease not until you have the testimony of your consciences, that you have in sincerity stated both these duties in your minds, which will never be done without many thoughts about them. Unless it be so with you, God will be greatly displeased at the neglect of his coming and call, now it is so plain and articulate.

culate. Fear the woful dooms recorded, Prov. i. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. Isa. lvi. 12. Chap. lxv. 4. to this purpose. And if any calamity, public or private, do overtake you under a neglect of these duties, you will be wofully surprized, and not know which way to turn for relief. This therefore is the time and season wherein you may have an especial trial and experiment whether you be spiritually-minded or no. It is the wisdom of faith to excite and draw forth grace into exercise according unto present occasions. If this grace be habitually resident in you, it will put itself forth in many thoughts about these present duties.

But alas! for the most part, men are apt to walk contrary to God in these things, as the wisdom of the flesh is contrary unto him in all things. A great instance we have with respect unto these duties, especially the latter of them. For, (1.) Who almost makes a diligent search into, and trial of his heart and ways, with respect unto the procuring causes of the displeasure and judgments of God? Generally when the tokens and evidences of them do most abound, the world is full of outragious provoking sins. These visibly proclaim themselves to be the causes of the 'coming of the wrath of God on the children of 'disobedience.' Hence most men are apt to cast the whole reason of present judgments upon them, and to put it wholly from themselves. Hence commonly there is never less of self-examination, than when it is called for in a peculiar manner. But as I will not deny, but that the open daring sins of the world, are the procuring cause of the wrath

wrath of God against it in temporal judgments; so the wisest course for us, is to refer them unto the great judgment of the last day. This the apostle directs us unto, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Our duty it is to consider on what accounts judgment begins at the house of God, and to examine ourselves with respect thereunto.

Again, the other part of our present duty in compliance with the voice of providence, is an humble resignation of ourselves, and all our concernments, unto the will of God, sitting loose in our affections from all earthly temporal enjoyments. This we neither do, nor can do, let us profess what we will, unless our thoughts are greatly exercised about the reasons of it and motives unto it. For this is the way whereby faith puts forth its efficacy unto the mortification of self and all earthly enjoyments. Wherefore without this we can make no resignation of ourselves unto the will of God. But alas! how many at present do openly walk contrary unto God herein? The ways, the countenances, the discourses of men do give evidence hereunto. Their love unto present things, their contrivances for their encrease and continuance, do grow and thrive, under the calls of God to the contrary. So it was of old; 'They did eat, 'they drank, they married and gave in marriage, 'untill the day that Noah entred into the ark.' Can the generality of professors at this day give testimony unto the exercise of their thoughts upon such things as should dispose them unto this holy resignation? That they meditate on the calls

of God, and thence make themſelves ready to part with all at his time and pleaſure? How can perſons pretend to be ſpiritually-minded, the current of whoſe thoughts lies in direct contrariety unto the mind of God?

Here lies the ground of their ſelf-deceivings; they are profeſſors of the goſpel in a peculiar manner, they judge themſelves believers, they hope they ſhall be ſaved, and have many evidences for it. But one negative evidence will render a hundred that are poſitive uſeleſs. ‘All ‘ theſe things have I done,’ ſaith the young man; ‘ yet one thing thou wanteſt,’ ſaith our Saviour. And the want of that one rendred his all things of no avail unto him. Many things you have done, many things you do, many grounds of hope abide with you, neither yourſelves nor others do doubt of your condition. But are you ſpiritually-minded? If this one thing be wanting, all the reſt will not avail you, you have indeed neither life nor peace. And what grounds have you to judge that you are ſo, if the current of your thoughts ly in direct contrariety unto the preſent calls of God? If at ſuch a time as this is, your love to the world be ſuch as ever it was, and perhaps be encreaſed; if your deſires are ſtrong to ſecure the things of this life unto you and yours; if the daily contrivance of your minds be not how you may attain a conſtant reſignation of yourſelves and your all, unto the will of God, which will not be done without much thoughtfulneſs and meditations on the reaſons of it, and motives unto it,

it, I cannot understand how you can judge yourselves to be spiritually-minded.

If any therefore shall say, That they would abound more in spiritual thoughts, only they know not what to fix them upon; I propose this in the first place, as that which will lead them unto the due performance of present duties.

Secondly, The special trials and temptations of men, call for the exercise of their thoughts in a peculiar manner with respect unto them. If a man hath a bodily disease, pain or distemper, it will cause him to think much of it whether he will or no; at least if he be wise he will so do; nor will he always be complaining of their smart, but enquire into their causes, and seek their removal. Yet are there some distempers, as lethargies, which in their own nature take away all sense and thoughts of themselves; and some are of such a slow secret progress, as hectic fevers, that they are not taken notice of. But both these are mortal. And shall men be more negligent about the spiritual distempers of their souls; so as to have multiplied temptations, the cause of all spiritual diseases, and take no thought about them? Is it not to be fear'd, that where it is so, they are such as either in their own nature have deprived them of spiritual sense, or by their deceitfulness are leading on insensibly unto death eternal? Not to have our minds exercised about these things, is to be stupidly secure, Prov. xxiii. 34, 35.

There is I confess some difficulty in this matter, how to exercise our thoughts aright about our temptations. For the great way of the preva-

lency of temptations is by stirring up multiplied thoughts about their objects, or what they do lead unto. And this is done or occasioned several ways. (1.) From the previous power of lust in the affections. This will fill the mind with thoughts. The heart will coin imaginations in compliance therewith. They are the way and means whereby lust draws away the heart from duty and enticeth unto sin, Jam. i. 14. The means at least whereby men come to have eyes full of adultery; 2 Pet. ii. 14. or live in constant contemplation of the pleasures of sin. (2.) They arise and are occasioned by renewed representations of the object of sin. And this is twofold; 1. That which is real, as Achan saw the wedge of gold and coveted it, Josh. vii. 21. Prov. xxiii. 31. Against this is that prayer of the Psalmist, 'Turn away mine eyes from 'beholding vanity;' and the covenant of Job, chap. xxxi. 1. (2.) Imaginary, when the imagination being tainted or infected by lust, continually represents the pleasure of sin and the actings of it unto the mind. Herein do men make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, Rom. xiii. 14. (3.) From the suggestions of Satan, who useth all his wiles and artifices to stir up thoughts about that sin whereunto the temptation leads. And temptation seldom fails of its end, when it can stir up a multitude of unprofitable thoughts about its object. For when temptations do multiply thoughts about sin, proceeding from some or all of these causes, and the mind hath wonted itself to give them entertainment, those in whom they are, do want nothing but opportunities

nities and occasions taking off the power of outward restraints for the commission of actual sin. When men have so devised mischief, they practise it when it is in the power of their hand, Mic. ii. 1. It is no way safe to advise such persons to have many thoughts about their temptations; they will all turn to their disadvantage.

I speak unto them only, unto whom their temptations are their affliction and their burden. And such persons also must be very careful how they suffer their thoughts to be exercised about the matter of their temptation, lest it be a snare, and be too hard for them. Men may begin their thoughts of any object with abhorrency and detestation, and, if it be in case of temptation, end them in complacency and approbation. The deceitfulness of sin lays hold on something or other that lust in the mind stays upon with delectation, and so corrupts the whole frame of spirit which began the duty. There have been instances wherein persons have entred with a resolution to punish sin, and have been insnared by the occasion unto the commission of the sin they thought to punish. Wherefore, it is seldom that the mind of any one exercised with an actual temptation, is able safely to conflict with it, if it entertain abiding thoughts of the matter of it, or of the sin whereunto it leads. For sin hath *mille nocendi artes*, and is able to transfuse its poison into the affections from every thing it hath once made a bait of, especially if it hath already defiled the mind with pleasing contemplations of it. Yea, oftentimes a man that hath some spiritual strength

and therein engageth unto the performance of duties, if in the midst of them the matter of his temptation is so presented unto him, as to take hold of his thoughts; in a moment, as if he had seen (as they say) Medusa's head, he is turned into a stone; his spirits are all frozen, his strength is gone, all actings of grace do cease, his armour falls from him, and he gives up himself a prey to his temptation. It must be a new supply of grace that can give him any deliverance. Wherefore, whilst persons are exercised with any temptation, I do not advise them to be conversant in their thoughts about the matter of it. For sometimes remembrances of former satisfaction of their lusts, sometimes present surprizals, with the suitableness of it unto corruption not yet mortified, sometimes the craft of Satan fixing their imagination on it, will be too hard for them, and carry them unto a fresh compliance with that sin, which they would be delivered from.

But this season calls in an especial manner for the exercise of the thoughts of men, about the ways and means of deliverance from the snare wherein they are taken, or the danger they find themselves exposed unto. Think of the guilt of sin, that you may be humbled; think of the power of sin, that you may seek strength against it; think not of the matter of sin, the things that are in the world suited unto the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, lest you be more and more entangled. But the present direction is, Think much of the ways of relief from the power of your own temptation leading unto sin. But this,

this, men unless they are spiritually-minded, are very loath to come unto. I speak not of them that love their shackles, that glory in their yoke, that like their temptations well enough, as those which give the most satisfactory entertainment unto their minds. Such men know not well what to do unless they may in their minds converse with the objects of their lusts, and do multiply thoughts about them continually. The apostle calls it 'making provision for the flesh, to fulfil 'the lusts thereof.' Their principal trouble is, That they cannot comply with them to the utmost by reason of some outward restraints. These dwell near unto 'those fools who make a mock 'of sin,' and will ere long take up their habitation among them.

But I speak, as I said before, of them only whose temptations are their afflictions, and who groan for deliverance from them. Acquaint such persons with the great, indeed only way of relief in this distress, as it is expressed, Heb. ii. 17, 18. 'He is a merciful and faithful High Priest 'in things appertaining unto God; for in that he 'himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able 'to succour them that tempted.' And chap iv. 15, 16. 'For we have not an High Priest that 'cannot be touched with the feeling of our infir'mities, but was in all points tempted like as we 'are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come bold'ly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain 'mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' Let them know that their only way for their deliverance is by acting faith in thoughts on Christ,

his power to succour them that are tempted; with the ways whereby he administreth a sufficiency of grace unto that end; retreating for relief unto him on the urgency of temptations, they can hardly be brought unto a compliance therewithal. They are ready to say, 'Are not Abana and 'Pharpar rivers of Damascus better than all the 'waters of Israel?' Is it not better to betake ourselves and to trust unto our own promises, resolutions and endeavours, with such other ways of escape, as are in our own power? I shall speak nothing against any of them in their proper place, so far as they are warranted by scripture rule. But this I say, None shall ever be delivered from perplexing temptations unto the glory of God and their own spiritual advantage, but by the acting and exercising of faith on Christ Jesus, and the sufficiency of his grace for our deliverance. But when men are not spiritually-minded, they cannot fix their thoughts on spiritual things. Therefore do men daily pine away under their temptations, they get ground upon them, until their breach grow great like the sea, and there be no healing of it.

I mention this only to shew the weight and necessity of the duty proposed. For when men under the power of conviction are pressed with temptation, they will do any thing rather than betake themselves unto the only efficacious relief. Some will groan and cry out under their vexation from the torture they are put unto in the conflict between their temptations and convictions. Some will betake themselves unto the pre-

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tended relief that any false religion tenders unto them. But to apply themselves in thoughts of faith unto Jesus Christ, whose grace alone is sufficient for all, that they will not be persuaded unto.

We are all of us liable unto temptations. Those who are not sensible of it, are under the power of what the temptation leads unto. And they are of two sorts. First, such as are extraordinary, when the hand of God is in them in a peculiar manner for our rebuke. It is true, God tempts none, as temptation formally leads unto sin. But he orders temptations so far forth as they are afflictive and chastisements. Thus it is when he suffers an especial corruption within to fall in conjunction with an especial temptation without, and to obtain a prevalency thereby. Of these there is no doubt, but any man not judicially hardened, may know both his disease and the remedy. But that ordinary course of temptations which we are exercised withall, needs a diligent attendance for their discovery, as well as for our deliverance from them. And it is to be feared, that many are kept in spiritual weakness, useless, and in darkness all their days through the power of their temptations, yet never know what they are, or wherein they consist. These grays hairs are sprinkled on them, yet they know it not; some approve themselves in those very things and ways which are their temptations. Yet in the exercise of due watchfulness, diligence and prudence, men may know both the plague of their own hearts in their prevailing corruptions, and the

the ways whereby it is excited thro' temptation, with the occasions it makes use of, and the advantages it takes. For instance: One may have an eminency in gifts, and usefulness or success in his labours, which gives him great acceptance with others. Such an one shall hardly avoid a double temptation. First, Of spiritual pride and self-exaltation. Hence the apostle will not admit a novice, one unexperienced in the ways of grace and deceits of sin, into the office of the ministry, lest he should be 'lifted up with pride, and fall 'into the condemnation of the devil,' 1 Tim. iii. 6. He himself was not without danger hereof, 2 Cor. xii. 17. The best of men can hardly fortify their minds against the secret workings of pride upon successes and applause, unless they keep them constantly ballanced with thoughts of their own vileness in the sight of God. And Secondly, Remissness unto exact universal mortification, which they countenance themselves against, by their acceptance and success above others in the ministry. It were much to be desired that all we who are ministers, would be careful in these things; for altho' some of us may not much please others, yet we may so far please ourselves, as to expose our souls unto these snares. And the effects of negligence herein do openly appear unto the disadvantage of the gospel: Others are much conversant in the world and the affairs of it. Negligence as unto a spiritual watch, vanity in converse, love of earthly things, with conformity unto the world, will on all occasions impose themselves upon them. If they understand not their temp-

temptations herein, ſpiritual-mindedneſs will be impaired in them continually. Thoſe that are rich have their eſpecial temptations, which for the moſt part are many, plauſible and effectual; and thoſe that are poor have theirs alſo. The ſnares of ſome lie in their conſtitutions, of others in their ſociety, of moſt in the various circumſtances of life. Thoſe who are upon their watch in any due meaſure, who exerciſe any wiſdom or obſervation concerning themſelves, may know wherein their temptations do ly, what are the advantages whereby they perplex their minds and endanger their ſouls.

In theſe caſes generally men are taught what are the ways and means of their deliverance and preſervation. Wherefore there are three things required unto this duty, and ſpiritual wiſdom unto them all. (1.) To know what are the eſpecial temptations from whence you ſuffer, and whereby the life of God is obſtructed in you. If this be neglected, if it be diſregarded, no man can maintain either life or peace, or is ſpiritually-minded. (2.) Know your remedy, your relief, wherein alone it doth conſiſt. Many duties are required of us unto this end, and are uſeful thereunto. But know aſſuredly, that no one of them, not all of them in conjunction will bring in relief unto the glory of God, and your own peace, without application by faith unto him who is able to ſuccour them that are tempted. Wherefore, (3.) Herein lies your great duty with reſpect unto your temptations, namely, in a conſtant exerciſe of your thoughts on the love, care, compaſſion

ſion and tenderneſs of Chriſt, with his ability to help, ſuccour and ſave them that do believe, ſo to ſtrengthen your faith and truſt in him, which will prove aſſuredly ſucceſsful and victorious.

The ſame duty is incumbent on us with reſpect unto any urgent prevalent general temptation. There are ſeaſons wherein an hour of temptation comes on the earth, to try them that dwell therein. What if a man ſhould judge that now it is ſuch an hour, and that the power of darkneſs is put forth therein? what if he ſhould be perſuaded that a general ſecurity, coldneſs, deadneſs and decay in grace, eſpecially as to the vigorous actings of zeal, love, and delight in God, with an indifferency unto holy duties, are the effects of this hour of temptation? I do not ſay determinately that ſo it is, let others judge as they ſee cauſe. But if any one do ſo judge, undoubtedly it is his duty to be exerciſed in his thoughts, how he may eſcape in this day of trial, and be counted worthy to ſtand before the Son of man. He will find it his concernment to be converſant in his mind with the reaſons and motives unto watchfulneſs, and how he may obtain ſuch ſupplies of grace, as may effectually preſerve him from ſuch decays.

Thirdly, All things in religion, both in faith and practice, are to be the objects of ſuch thoughts. As they are propoſed to occur unto our minds in great variety, on all ſorts of occaſions, ſo we ought to give them entertainment in our meditations. To hear things, to have them propoſed unto us, it may be, in the way of a divine ordinance, and

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to let them ſlip out, or flow from us, as water that is poured into a leaking veſſel, is the ruin of many ſouls. I ſhall therefore chooſe out ſome inſtances, as was before propoſed, of thoſe things which I judge that they who would be ſpiritually-minded, ought to abide and abound in thoughts concerning them.

1. It is our duty greatly to mind the things that are above, eternal things, both as unto their reality, their preſent ſtate, and our future enjoyment of them. Herein conſiſts the life of this grace and duty. To be heavenly-minded, that is, to mind the things of heaven, and to be ſpiritually-minded, is all one; or it is the effect of being ſpiritually-minded, as unto its original and eſſence; or the firſt proper actings of it. It is the cauſe of it, as unto its growth and degrees; and it is the evidence of it in experience. Nor do I underſtand how it is poſſible for a man to place his chief intereſt in things above, and not have many thoughts of them. It is the great advice of the apoſtle, on a ſuppoſition of our intereſt in Chriſt and conformity unto him, Col. iii. 1, 2. 'If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe 'things that are above, where Chriſt ſitteth at 'the right hand of God.' Set your affections (or your thoughts) mind much, the things that are above. It becomes thoſe who thro' the virtue of the reſurrection of Chriſt are raiſed unto newneſs of life, to have their thoughts exerciſed on the ſtate of things above, with reſpect unto the preſence of Chriſt among them. And the ſingular uſe of our proſpect into theſe things, or our

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meditations on them, he instructs us in, 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 18. 'For which cause we faint not, 'but tho' our outward man perish, yet the in-'ward man is renewed day by day. For our light 'affliction which is but for a moment, worketh 'for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight 'of glory. Whilst we look not at the things 'which are seen, but at the things which are not 'seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, 'but the things which are not seen are eternal.' Not to faint under the daily decays of our outward man, and the approaches of death thereby, to bear afflictions as things light and momentary, to thrive under all in the inward man, are unspeakable mercies and privileges. Can you attain a better frame? Is there any thing that you would more desire, if you are believers? Is it not better to have such a mind in us, than to enjoy all the peace and security that the world can afford? One principal means whereby we are made partakers of these things, is a due meditation on things unseen and eternal. These are the things that are within the vail, whereon we ought to cast the anchor of our hope in all the storms we meet withal, Heb. vi. 19, 20. whereof we shall speak more afterwards.

Without doubt the generality of Christians are greatly defective in this duty, partly for want of light into them, partly for want of delight in them; they think little of an eternal country. Wherever men are, they do not use to neglect thoughts of that country wherein their inheritance lies. If they are absent from it for a season, yet will

will they labour to acquaint themſelves with the principal concernments of it. But this heavenly country wherein lies our eternal inheritance, is not regarded. Men do not as they ought exerciſe themſelves unto thoughts of things eternal and inviſible. It were impoſſible if they did ſo, that their minds ſhould be ſo earthly, and their affections cleave ſo as they do unto preſent things. He that looks ſteadily on the ſun, altho' he cannot bear the luſtre of its beams fully, yet his ſight is ſo affected with it, that when he calls off his eyes from it, he can ſee nothing as it were of the things about him, they are all dark unto him. And he who looks ſteadily in his contemplations on things above, eternal things, tho' he cannot comprehend their glory, yet a vail will be caſt by it on all the deſirable beauties of earthly things, and take off his affections from them.

Men live and act under the power of a conviction, that there is a ſtate of immortality and glory to come. With a perſuaſion hereof they much relieve themſelves in their ſorrows, ſufferings and temptations. Yet with many it is only a reſerve when they can be here no more; but as unto daily contemplation of the nature and cauſes of it, or as unto any entrance into it by faith and hope, the moſt are ſtrangers thereunto. If we are ſpiritually-minded, nothing will be more natural unto us, than to have many thoughts of eternal things, as thoſe wherein all our own principal concerns do ly, as well as thoſe which are excellent and glorious in themſelves. The direction thereon is, That we would make heavenly

ly things, the things of the future ſtate of bleſſedneſs and glory, a principal object of our thoughts; that we would think much about them, that we would meditate much upon them. Many are diſcouraged herein, by their ignorance, and darkneſs, by their want of due conceptions and ſteady apprehenſions of inviſible things. Hence one of theſe two things do befal them, when they would meditate on things above. (1.) The glory of them, the glory of God in them, being eſſentially infinite and incomprehenſible, doth immediately overwhelm them, and as it were in a moment, put them unto an utter loſs, that they cannot frame one thought in their minds about them. Or (2.) They want ſkill and ability to conceive aright of inviſible things, and to diſpoſe of them in ſuch order in their minds, as that they may ſedately exerciſe their thoughts about them. Both theſe ſhall be afterwards ſpoken unto. At preſent I ſhall only ſay, That

Whoſoever ſhall ſincerely engage in this duty according unto what he hath, and ſhall abide conſtant therein, he will make ſuch a refreſhing progreſs in his apprehenſion of heavenly things, as he will be greatly ſatisfied withal. We are kept in darkneſs, ignorance, and unſteadineſs of meditations about them, not from the nature of the things themſelves, but from our own ſloth, negligence, and readineſs to be turned aſide by apprehenſions of difficulties, or the lion in the way. Wherefore I ſhall conſider two things. (1.) What are the principal motives unto this duty of fixing our thoughts on the things that are above,

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and the advantages which we receive thereby. (2.) Give some directions how and on what in particular we may exercise our thoughts on those things above.

(1.) Faith will be encreased and strengthened by it. Invisible things are the proper objects of faith. It is the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1. Wherefore in our thoughts of them, faith is in its proper exercise, which is the principal means of its growth and encrease. And hereon two things will ensue.

1. The soul will come unto a more satisfactory abiding sense of the reality of them. Things of imagination which maintain a value of themselves by darkness, will not bear a diligent search into them. They lose of their reputation on every serious enquiry. If rational men would but give themselves the liberty of free indagation by their own thoughts, it would quickly cashier the fools paradise of Mahomet, the purgatory of the Papists, and all such creatures of imagination and superstition. But where things are real and substantial, the more they are enquired into, the more they evidence their being and subsistence. It is not therefore every profession of a faith of a future state of blessedness that will realize it in our minds. And therefore, for the most part, it is rather a notion that men have of heavenly things which they do not contradict, than any solid satisfaction in, or spiritual sense of their reality. For these are things 'that 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor will enter into the heart of man to conceive,' whose

existence, nature and real state are not easily comprehended. But through the continual exercise of holy thoughts about them, the soul obtains an entrance into the midst of them, finding in them both durable substance and riches. There is no way therefore to strengthen faith unto any degree, but by a daily contemplation on the things themselves. They who do not think of them frequently, shall never believe them sincerely. They admit not of any collateral evidence, where they do not evidence themselves unto our souls. Faith, as we said, thus exercised, will give them a subsistence, not in themselves, which they have antecedent thereunto; but in us, in our hearts, in the minds of them that do believe. Imagination creates its own object; faith finds it prepared before-hand. It will not leave a bare notion of them in the understanding, but give them a spiritual subsistence in the heart; as Christ himself dwells in our hearts by faith. And there are two things that will discover this subsistence of them in us. (1.) When we find them in a continual readiness to rise up in our minds, on all occasions wherein the thoughts and remembrance of them are needful and useful unto us. There are many seasons, some whereof shall be immediately spoken unto, and many duties wherein and whereunto the faith and thoughts of things invisible and eternal are needful unto us, so as that we cannot fill up those seasons, nor perform those duties in a due manner without them. If on all such occasions they do from the inward frame of our minds present themselves unto us,

or

or through our acquaintance and familiarity with them, we recur in our thoughts unto them, they seem to have a real subsistence given unto them in our souls. But if on such occasions wherein alone they will yield us help and relief, we accustom ourselves to other thoughts, if those concerning them are, as it were, out of the way, and arise not in our minds of their own accord, we are yet strangers unto this effect of faith. (2.) They are realized unto us, they have a subsistence in us, when the soul continually longeth to be in them. When they have given such a relish unto our hearts, as the first fruits of glory, that we cannot but desire on all opportune considerations, to be in the full enjoyment of them, faith seems to have had its effectual work herein upon us. For want of these things do many among us walk in disconsolation all their days.

2. It will gradually give the heart an acquaintance with the especial nature and use of these things. General thoughts and notions of heaven and glory, do but fluctuate up and down in the mind, and very little influence it unto other duties. But assiduous contemplation will give the mind such distinct apprehensions of heavenly things as shall duly affect it with the glory of them. The more we discern of the glory and excellency of them in their own nature, of their suitableness unto ours, as our only proper rest and blessedness, as the perfection and complement of what is already begun in us by grace, of the restless tendency of all gracious dispositions and inclinations of our hearts towards their enjoyment,

the more will faith be established in its cleaving unto them; so in the contemplation of these things consists the principal food of faith, whereby it is nourished and strengthened. And we are not to expect much work, where there is not provision of proper food for them that labour. No wonder if we find faith faint and weak in the work it hath to do, which oft-times is great and weighty, if we neglect to guide it daily unto that which should administer strength unto it.

(2.) It will give life and exercise unto the grace of hope. Hope is a glorious grace, whereunto blessed effects are ascribed in the scripture, and an effectual operation unto the supportment and consolation of believers. By it are we purified, sanctified, saved. And, to sum up the whole of its excellency and efficacy, it is a principal way of the working of Christ as inhabiting in us, Col. i. 27. 'Christ in you the hope of glory.' Where Christ evidenceth his presence with us, he gives us an infallible hope of glory; he gives us an assured pledge of it, and worketh our souls unto an expectation of it. Hope in general is but an uncertain expectation of a future good which we desire. But as it is a gospel grace, all uncertainty is removed from under it, which would hinder us of the advantage intended in it. It is an earnest expectation proceeding from faith, trust and confidence, accompanied with longing desires of enjoyment. From a mistake of its nature it is, that few Christians labour after it, exercise themselves unto it, or have the benefit of it. For to live by hope, they suppose infers a state not only beneath the

the life of faith and all assurance in believing, but also exclusive of them. They think, to hope to be saved, is a condition of men who have no grounds of faith or assurance. But this is to turn a blessed fruit of the Spirit, into a common affection of nature. Gospel hope is a fruit of faith, trust and confidence. Yea, the height of the actings of all grace issues in a well-grounded hope, nor can it rise any higher, Rom. v. 2, 3, 4, 5.

Now the reason why men have no more use of, no more benefit by this excellent grace, is because they do not abide in thoughts and contemplation of the things hoped for. The especial object of hope is eternal glory, Col. i. 27. Rom. v. 2. The peculiar use of it is, to support, comfort and refresh the soul in all trials, under all weariness and despondencies, with a firm expectation of a speedy entrance into that glory, with an earnest desire after it. Wherefore unless we acquaint ourselves by continual meditation with the reality and nature of this glory; it is impossible it should be the object of a vigorous active hope, such as whereby the apostle says, we are saved. Without this we can neither have that evidence of eternal things, nor that valuation of them, nor that preparedness in our minds for them, as should keep us in the exercise of gracious hope about them.

Suppose sundry persons engaged in a voyage unto a most remote country, wherein all of them have an apprehension that there is a place of rest, and an inheritance provided for them. Under this apprehension they all put themselves upon

their voyage, to possess what is so prepared. Howbeit some of them have only a general notion of these things, they know nothing distinctly concerning them, and are so busied about other affairs, that they have no leisure to inquire into them, or do suppose that they cannot come unto any satisfactory knowledge of them in particular, and so are content to go on with general hopes and expectations. Others there are who by all possible means acquaint themselves particularly with the nature of the climate whither they are going, with the excellency of the inheritance and provision that is made for them. Their voyage proves long and wearisome, their difficulties many, and their dangers great, and they have nothing to relieve and encourage themselves, but the hope and expectation of the country whither they are going. Those of the first sort will be very apt to despond and faint; their general hopes will not be able to relieve them. But those who have a distinct notion and apprehension of the state of things whither they are going, and of their incomparable excellency, have always in a readiness wherewith to chear their minds and support themselves.

In that journey or pilgrimage wherein we are engaged towards an heavenly country, we are sure to meet with all kinds of dangers, difficulties and perils. It is not a general notion of blessings that will excite and work in us a spiritual refreshing hope. But when we think and meditate on future glory as we ought, that grace which is neglected for the most part as unto its benefit, and dead

dead as unto its exercise, will of all others be most vigorous and active, putting itself forth on all occasions. This therefore is an inestimable benefit of the duty exhorted unto, and which they find the advantage of, who are really spiritually-minded.

3. This alone will make us ready for the cross, for all sorts of sufferings that we may be exposed unto.

There is nothing more necessary unto believers at this season, than to have their minds furnished with provision of such things as may prepare them for the cross and sufferings. Various intimations of the mind of God, circumstances of providence, the present state of things in the world, with the instant peril of the latter days, do all call them hereunto. If it be otherwise with them, they will at one time or other be wofully surprized, and think strange of their trials, as if some strange thing did befal them. Nothing is more useful unto this end, than constant thoughts and contemplations of eternal things and future glory. From thence alone can the soul have in a readiness, what to lay in the balance against all sorts of sufferings. When a storm begins to arise at sea, the mariners bestir themselves in the management of the tackling of the ship, and other applications of their art for their safety. But if the storm encrease and come to extremity, they are forced to forego all other means and betake themselves unto a sheat-anchor, to hold their ship steady against its violence. So when a storm of persecution and troubles begins to arise, men have various ways and considerations for their

 relief.

relief. But if it once comes to extremity, if ſword, nakedneſs, famine, and death, are inevitably coming upon them, they have nothing to betake themſelves unto that will yield them ſolid relief, but the conſideration and faith of things inviſible and eternal.

So the apoſtle declares this ſtate of things, 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 18. the words before inſiſted on. 'For which cauſe we faint not, but though 'our outward man periſh, yet the inward is re'newed day by day. For our light afflictions 'which is but for a moment, worketh for us a 'far more exceeding and eternal weight of glo'ry; while we look not at the things which are 'ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen; for 'the things which are ſeen are temporal, but the 'things which are not ſeen are eternal.' He lays all ſorts of afflictions in one ſcale, and on the conſideration of them, declares them to be light and but for a moment. Then he lays glory in the other ſcale, and finds it to be ponderous, weighty, and eternal; 'an exceeding weight of 'glory.' In the one is ſorrow for a little while, in the other eternal joy. In the one pain for a few moments, in the other everlaſting reſt; in the one is the loſs of ſome few temporary things, in the other the full fruition of God in Chriſt, who is all in all.

Hence the ſame apoſtle caſts up the account of theſe things, and gives us his judgment concerning them, Rom. viii. 18. 'For I reckon that 'the ſufferings of this preſent time are not to be 'compared with the glory that ſhall be revealed 'in

'in us;' there is no comparison between them; as if one had as much evil and misery in them, as the other hath of good and blessedness; as though his state was any way to be complained of, who must undergo the one whilst he hath an interest in the other; or as though to escape the one, he hazard the enjoyment of the other.

It is inseparable from our nature to have a fear of and aversation from great distressing sufferings, that are above the power of nature to bear. Even our Lord Jesus himself, having taken on him all the sinless properties of our natures, had a fear and aversation, though holy and gracious, with respect unto his own. Those who through a stout-heartedness do contemn them before their approach, boasting in themselves of their abilities to undergo them, censuring such as will not unadvisedly engage in them, are such as seldom glorify God when they are really to conflict with them. Peter alone trusted unto himself that he would not forsake his Master, and seemed to take the warning ill that they should all do so; and he alone denied him. All church stories are filled with instances of such as having born themselves high before the approach of trials, have shamefully miscarried when their trials have come. Wherefore it is moreover allowed unto us, to use all lawful means for the avoiding of them. Both rules and examples of the scripture give sufficient warranty for it. But there are times and seasons wherein without any tergiversation they are to be undergone unto the glory of God, and in the discharge of our duty, con-

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fessing Christ before men, as we would be owned by him before his Father in heaven. All things do now call us to prepare for such a season, to be martyrs in resolution, though we should never really lose our lives by violence. Nothing will give us this preparation, but to have our minds exercised in the contemplation of heavenly things, of things that are invisible and eternal. He who is thus spiritually-minded, who hath his thoughts and affections set on things above, will have always in a readiness what to oppose unto any circumstance of his sufferings.

Those views which such an one hath had by faith, of the increated glories above, of the things in heavenly places, 'where Christ sits at the right 'hand of God,' of the glory within the vail, whereby they have been realized and made present unto his soul, will now visit him every moment, abide with him continually, and put forth their efficacy unto his supportment and refreshment. Alas! what will become of many of us, who are grovelling continually on the earth, whose bellies cleave unto the dust, who are strangers unto the thoughts of heavenly things, when distressing troubles shall befal us? Why shall we think that refreshing thoughts of things above will then visit our souls, when we resisted their admittance in days of peace? Do you come to me in your distress, saith Jephthah, when in the time of your peace you drove me from you? When we would thus think of heavenly things to our refreshment, we shall hardly get them to make an abode with us. I know God can come

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in, by the mighty power of his Spirit and grace, to support and comfort the souls of them who are called and even surprized into the greatest of sufferings. Yet do I know also that it is our duty, not to tempt him in the neglect of the ways and means which he hath appointed for the communication of his grace unto us.

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, as 'the author 'and finisher of our faith, for the joy that was 'set before him, endured the cross, and despised 'the shame,' Heb. xii. 2. His mediatory glory in the salvation of the church, was the matter of the 'joy set before him.' This he took the view and prospect of in all his sufferings, unto his refreshment and supportment. And his example, as 'the author and finisher of our faith,' is more efficaciously instructive than any other rule or precept. Eternal glory is set before us also; It is the design of God's wisdom and grace, that by the contemplation of it we should relieve ourselves in all our sufferings, yea, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. How many of those blessed souls now in the enjoyment of God and glory, who passed through fiery trials and great tribulations, were enabled to sing and rejoice in the flames by a prepossession of this glory in their minds through believing? yea some have been so filled with them, as to take off all sense of pain under the most exquisite tortures. When Stephen was to be stoned, to encourage him in his sufferings, and comfort him in it, the 'heavens were opened, and he saw Jesus stand'ing at the right hand of God.' Who can conceive

ceive what contempt of all the rage and madness of the Jews, what a neglect of all the pains of death this view raised his holy soul unto? To obtain therefore such views frequently by faith, as they do who are truly spiritually-minded, is the most effectual way to encourage us unto all our sufferings. The apostle gives us the force of this encouragement in a comparison with earthly things. 1 Cor. ix. 25. 'Every man who striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things; Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.' If men, when a corruptible crown of vain honour and applause is proposed unto them, will do and endure all that is needful for the attainment of it, and relieve themselves in their hardships with thoughts and imaginations of attaining it, grounded on uncertain hopes; shall not we who have a crown immortal and invisible proposed unto us, and that with the highest assurance of the enjoyment of it, chearfully undergo, endure and suffer what we are to go through in the way unto it?

4. This is the most effectual means to wean the heart and affections from things here below; to keep the mind unto an undervaluation, yea, a contempt of them, as occasion shall require. For there is a season wherein there is such a contempt required in us of all relations and enjoyments, as our Saviour calleth, the hating of them; that is, not absolutely but comparatively, in comparison of him and the gospel, with the duties which belong unto our profession, Luke xiv. 26. 'If any man come to me, and hate not father and mo-

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'ther, and wife, and children, and brethren, and 'sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be 'my disciple.' Some, I fear, if they did but consider it, would be apt to say, 'This is an hard 'saying, who can bear it?' and others cry out with the disciples in another case, 'Lord, who 'then can be saved?' But it is the word whereby we must be judged, nor can we be the disciples of Christ on any other terms. But here, in an especial manner, lies the wound and weakness of faith and profession in these our days. The bellies of men cleave unto the dust, or their affections unto earthly things.

I speak not of those who by rapine, deceit and oppression, strive to enrich themselves; not of those who design nothing more than the attainment of greatness and promotions in the world, though not by ways of open wickedness; least of all of them who make religion, and perhaps their ministry therein, a means for the attaining secular ends and preferments. No wise man can suppose such persons, any of them, to be spiritually-minded, and it is most easy to disprove all their pretences. But I intend only those at present, whose ways and means of attaining riches, are lawful, honest and unblameable; who use them with some moderation, and do profess that their portion lies in better things; so as it is hard to fasten a conviction on them in matter of their conversation. Whatever may seem to reflect upon them, they esteem it to be that whose omission would make them foolish in their affairs, or negligent in their duty. But even among these also,

alſo, there is oft-times that inordinate love unto preſent things, that eſteem and valuation of them, that concernment in them, as are not conſiſtent with their being ſpiritually-minded. With ſome their relations, with ſome their enjoyments, with moſt both in conjunction, are an idol which they ſet up in their hearts, and ſecretly bow down unto. About theſe are their hopes and fears exerciſed, on them is their love, in them is their delight. They are wholly taken up with their own concerns, count all loſt that is not ſpent on them, and all time miſpent that is not engaged about them. Yet the things which they do, they judge to be good in themſelves, their hearts do not condemn them as to the matter of them. The valuation they have of their relations and enjoyments they ſuppoſe to be lawful, within the bounds which they have aſſigned unto it. Their care about them is, in their own minds, but their duty. It is no eaſy matter, it requires much ſpiritual wiſdom to fix right boundaries unto our affections, and their actings about earthly things. But let men plead and pretend what they pleaſe, I ſhall offer one rule in this caſe which will not fail. And this is, that when men are ſo confident in the good ſtate and meaſure of their affections and their actings towards earthly things, as that they will oppoſe their engagements into them, unto known duties of religion, piety and charity, they are gone into a ſinful exceſs. Is there a ſtate of the poor that requires their liberality and bounty? you muſt excuſe them, they have families to provide for; when what is expected

pected from them signifies nothing at all, as unto a due provision for their families, nor is what would lessen their inheritances or portions one penny in the issue. Are they called to an attendance on seasons of religious duties? they are so full of business, that it is impossible for them, to have leisure for any such occasions; so by all ways declaring that they are under the power of a prevalent predominant affection unto earthly things. This fills all places with lifeless, sapless, useless professors, who approve themselves in their condition, whilst it is visibly unspiritual and withering.

The heart will have something whereon, in a way of pre-eminence, it will fix itself and its affections. This in all its perpetual motions it seeks for rest and satisfaction in; and every man hath an edge, the edge of his affections is set one way or other, though it be more keen in some than others. And whereas all sorts of things, that the heart can fix upon, or turn the edge of its affections unto, are distributed by the apostle into things above and things beneath, things heavenly and things earthly, if we have not such a view and prospect of heavenly things as to cause our hearts to cleave unto them, and delight in them, let us pretend what we will, it is impossible but that we shall be under the power of a predominant affection unto the things of this world.

Herein lies the great danger of multitudes at this present season. For, let men profess what they will, under the power of this frame, their eternal state is in hazard every moment. And

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persons are engaged in it in great variety of degrees. And we may cast them under two heads.

1. Some do not at all understand that things are amiss with them, or that they are much to be blamed. They plead, as was before observed, that they are all lawful things which their hearts do cleave unto, and which it is their duty to take care of and regard. May they not delight in their own relations, especially at such a time when others break and cancel all duties and bonds of relation, in the service of, and provision they make for their lusts? May they not be careful in good and honest ways of diligence about the things of the world, when the most either lavish their time away in the pursuit of bestial lusts, or heap them up by deceit and oppression? May they not contrive for the promotion of their children in the world, to add the other hundred or thousand pounds unto their advancement, that they may be in as good condition as others, seeing he is worse than an infidel who provides not for his own family? By such reasonings and secret thoughts do many justify themselves in their earthly-mindedness. And so fixed they are in the approbation of themselves, that if you urge them to their duty, you shall lose their acquaintance, if they do not become your enemies for telling them the truth. Yea, they will avoid one duty that lieth not against their earthly interest, because it leads unto another. They will not engage in religious assemblies, or be constant unto their duty in them, for fear duties of charity should be required of them, or expected from them:

them: on what grounds ſuch perſons can ſatisfy themſelves that they are ſpiritually-minded, I know not. I ſhall leave only one rule with perſons that are thus minded. Where our love unto the world hath prevailed, by its reaſonings, pleas and pretences, to take away our fear and jealouſy over our own hearts, leſt we ſhould inordinately love it, there it is aſſuredly predominant in us.

2. Others are ſenſible of the evil of their hearts, at leaſt are jealous and afraid leſt it ſhould be found that their hearts do cleave inordinately unto theſe things. Hence they endeavour to contend againſt this evil, ſometimes by forcing themſelves unto ſuch acts of piety or charity as are contrary unto that frame, and ſometimes by labouring a change of the frame itſelf: Eſpecially they will do ſo when God is pleaſed to awaken them by trials and afflictions, ſuch as write vanity and emptineſs on all earthly enjoyments. But for the moſt part they ſtrive not lawfully, and ſo obtain not what they ſeem to aim at.

This diſeaſe with many is mortal; and will not be throughly cured in any but by the due exerciſe of this part of ſpiritual-mindedneſs. There are other duties required alſo unto the ſame end, namely, of the mortification of our deſires and affections unto earthly things, whereof I have treated elſewhere. But without this, or a fixed contemplation on the deſireableneſs, beauty and glory of heavenly things, it will not be attained. Further, To evince the truth hereof, we may obſerve theſe two things. Firſt, If by any means a man do ſeem to have taken off

his heart from the love of preſent things, and be not at the ſame time taken up with the love of things that are heavenly, his ſeeming mortification is of no advantage unto him. So perſons frequently through diſcontent, diſappointments or diſſatisfaction with relations, or meer natural wearineſs, have left the world, the affairs and cares of it, as unto their wonted converſations in it, and have betaken themſelves to monaſteries, convents, or other retirements ſuiting their principles, without any advantage to their ſouls. Secondly, God is no ſuch ſevere Lord and Maſter, as to require us to take off our affections from, and mortify them unto thoſe things which the law of our nature makes dear unto us, as wives, children, houſes, lands, and poſſeſſions, and not propoſe unto us ſomewhat that is incomparably more excellent to fix them upon. So he invites the elect of the Gentiles unto Chriſt, Pſal. xlv. 10. ‘ Hearken, O daughter, and con-‘ ſider, and incline thine ear: forget alſo thine ‘ own people, and thy father's houſe;’ that is, come into the faith of Abraham, who forſook his country, and his father's houſe, to follow God whitherſoever he pleaſed. But he propoſeth this for their encouragement, ver. 11. ‘ So ſhall ‘ the King greatly deſire thy beauty; for he is ‘ thy Lord, and worſhip thou him.’ The love of the great King is an abundant ſatisfactory recompence for parting with all things in this world. So when Abraham's ſervant was ſent to take Rebecca for a wife unto Iſaac, he required that ſhe ſhould immediately leave father and mother, bro-

thers and all enjoyments, and go along with him; but withal, that ſhe might know herſelf to be no loſer thereby, he not only aſſured her of the greatneſs of his maſter, but alſo at preſent he gave her jewels of ſilver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, Gen. xxiv. 53. And when our Saviour requires that we ſhould part with all for his ſake and the goſpel, he promiſeth an hundred fold in lieu of them even in this life, namely, in an intereſt in things ſpiritual and heavenly. Wherefore, without an aſſiduous meditation on heavenly things, as a better, more noble and ſuitable object for our affections to be fixed on, we can never be freed in a due manner from an inordinate love of the things here below.

It is ſad to ſee ſome profeſſors who will keep up ſpiritual duties in churches and in their families, who will ſpeak and diſcourſe of ſpiritual things, and keep themſelves from the open exceſſes of the world; yet when they come to be tried by ſuch duties as entrench on their love and adherence unto earthly things, quickly manifeſt how remote they are from being ſpiritually-minded in a due manner. Were they to be tried, as our Saviour tried the young man who made ſuch a profeſſion of his conſcientious and religious converſation; 'Go ſell what thou haſt, give to the 'poor, and follow me;' ſomething might be pleaded in excuſe for their tergiverſation. But alas! they will decline their duty when they are not touched unto the hundreth part of their enjoyments.

I bleſs God, I ſpeak not thus of many of my

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own knowledge; and may ſay with the apoſtle unto the moſt unto whom I uſually ſpeak in this manner: 'But beloved, we are perſuaded better things of you, and things that accompany ſalvation, tho' we thus ſpeak,' Heb. vi. 9. Yea, the ſame teſtimony may be given of many in this city, which the ſame apoſtle gives unto the churches of Macedonia, 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2, 3. 'Underſtand the grace of God beſtowed on the churches of Macedonia, how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, and beyond their power, they were willing of themſelves.' There hath been nothing done amongſt us, that may or can be boaſted of; yet conſidering all circumſtances, it may be there have not been more inſtances of true evangelical charity in any age or place for theſe many years. For them who have been but uſeful and helpful herein, the Lord remember them for good, and ſpare them according to the multitude of his mercies. It is true, they have not, many of them, founded colleges, built hoſpitals, or raiſed works of ſtate and magnificence. For very many of them are ſuch, as whoſe 'deep poverty comparatively hath abounded unto the riches of their liberality.' The backs and bellies of multitudes of poor and needy ſervants of Chriſt have been warmed and refreſhed by them, bleſſing God for them. 'Thanks be to God,' ſaith the apoſtle in this caſe, 'for his unſpeakable gift,' 2 Cor. ix. 15. Bleſſed be God who hath not left the goſpel without this glory, nor the

the profession of it without this evidence of its power and efficacy. Yea, God hath exalted the glory of persecutions and afflictions. For many, since they have lost much of their enjoyments by them, and have all endangered continually, have abounded in duties of charity beyond what they did in the days of their fulness and prosperity. So 'out of the eater there hath come forth 'meat.' And if the world did but know what fruits in a way of charity and bounty, unto the praise of God and glory of the gospel, have been occasioned by their making many poor, it would abate of their satisfaction in their successes.

But with many it is not so. Their minds are so full of earthly things, they do so cleave unto them in their affections, that no sense of duty, no example of others, no concernment of the glory of God or the gospel, can make any impressions on them. If there be yet in them so much life and light of grace, as to design a deliverance from this woful condition, the means insisted on must be made use of.

Especially this advice is needful unto those who are rich, who have large possessions, or abound in the goods of this world. The poor, the afflicted, the sorrowful, are prompted from their outward circumstances, as well as excited by inward grace, frequently to remember and to think of the things above, wherein lies their only reserve and relief against the trouble and urgency of their present condition. But the enjoyment of these things in abundance, is ac-

companied with a twofold evil, lying directly contrary unto this duty.

1. A deſire of encreaſe and adding thereunto. Earthly enjoyments enlarge mens earthly deſires; and the love of them grows with their income. A moderate ſtock of waters, ſufficient for our uſe, may be kept within ordinary banks. But if a flood be turned into them, they know no bounds, but overflow all about them. The encreaſe of wealth and riches enlargeth the deſires of men after them, beyond all bounds of wiſdom, ſobriety, or ſafety. He that labours hard for his daily bread, hath ſeldom ſuch earneſt vehement deſires of an addition unto what he hath, as many have who already have more than they know how to uſe, or almoſt what to do withal. This they muſt have more, and the laſt advantage ſerves for nothing but to ſtir them up to look out for another. And yet ſuch men would on other accounts be eſteemed good Chriſtians, and ſpiritually-minded, as all good Chriſtians are.

2. They draw the heart to value and eſteem them, as thoſe which bring in their ſatisfaction, and make them to differ from thoſe whom they ſee to be poor and miſerable. Now theſe things are contrary unto, and where they are habitually prevalent, inconſiſtent utterly with being ſpiritually-minded. Nor is it poſſible, that any who in the leaſt degree are under their power, can ever attain deliverance, unleſs their thoughts are fixed, and their minds thereby poſſeſſed with due apprehenſions of inviſible things and eternal glory.

These are some few of those many advantages which we may obtain by fixing our thoughts and meditations, and thereby our affections on the things that are above. And there are some things which make me willing to give some few directions for the practice of this duty. For whatever else we are and do, we neither are nor can be truly spiritually-minded, whereon life and peace depend, unless we do really exercise our thoughts unto meditations of things above. Without it all our religion is but vain. And as I fear, men are generally wanting and defective herein, in point of practice, so I do also, that many thro' the darkness of their minds, the weakness of their intellectuals, and ignorance of the nature of all things unseen, do seldom set themselves unto the contemplation of them. I shall therefore give some few directions for the practice of this duty.

## CHAP. VI.

*Directions unto the Exercise of our Thoughts on Things above: Things future, invisible, and eternal: On God himself, with the Difficulties of it, and Oppositions unto it, and the Way of their Removal. Right Notions of future Glory stated.*

WE have treated in general before of the proper objects of our spiritual thoughts, as unto our present duty. That which we were

last engaged in, is an especial instance in heavenly things; things future and invisible, with the fountain and spring of them all in Christ and God himself. And because men generally are unskilled herein, and great difficulties arise in the way of the discharge of this part of the duty in hand, I shall give some especial directions concerning it.

1. Possess your minds with right notions and apprehensions of things above, and of the state of future glory. We are in this duty 'to look at the 'things which are not seen,' 2 Cor. iv. 16. It is faith only whereby we have a prospect of them; for 'we walk by faith, and not by sight.' And faith can give us no interest in them, unless we have due apprehensions of them. For it doth but assent and cleave unto the truth of what is proposed unto it. And the greatest part of mankind do both deceive themselves, and feed on ashes in this matter. They fancy a future estate which hath no foundation but in their own imaginations. Wherefore the apostle, directing us to seek and mind the 'things that are above,' adds for the guidance of our thoughts, the consideration of the principal concernment of them, 'where Christ 'sitteth at the right hand of God,' Col. iii. 1, 2. He would lead us unto distinct apprehensions of those heavenly things, especially of the presence of Christ in his exaltation and glory. Wherefore the true notion of these things which we are to possess our minds withal, may here be considered.

All that have an apprehension of a future state of happiness do agree in this matter, that it contains in it, or is accompanied with a deliverance

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and freedom from all that is evil. But in what is so, they are not agreed. Many esteem only those things that are grievous, troublesome, wasting and destructive unto nature to be so; that is, what is penal, in pain, sickness, sorrow, loss, poverty, with all kind of outward troubles, and death itself, are evil. Wherefore they suppose that the future state of blessedness will free them from all these things, if they can attain unto it. This they will lay in the ballance against the troubles of life, and sometimes it may be against the pleasures of it, which they must forego. Yea, persons profane and profligate will in words at least profess, that heaven will give them rest from all their troubles. But it is no place of rest for such persons.

Unto all others also, unto believers themselves, these things are evil, such as they expect a deliverance from in heaven and glory. And there is no doubt, but it is lawful for us, and meet that we should contemplate on them, as those which will give us a deliverance from all outward troubles, death itself, and all that leads thereunto. Heaven is promised as rest unto them that are troubled, 2 Thess. i. 7. It is our duty under all our sufferings, reproaches, persecutions, troubles, and sorrows, to raise up our minds unto the contemplation of that state, wherein we shall be freed from them all. It is a blessed notion of heaven, that God shall therein 'wipe away all tears from 'our eyes,' Rev. vii. 17. or remove far from us all causes of sorrow. And it would be unto our advantage, if we did accustom our minds more un-

unto this kind of relief than we do; if upon the incursion of fears, dangers, sorrows, we did more readily retreat unto thoughts of that state wherein we shall be freed from them all; even this most inferior consideration of it, would render the thoughts of it more familiar, and the thing itself more useful unto us. Much better it were, than on such occasions to be exercised with heartless complaints, uncertain hopes, and fruitless contrivances.

But there is that which unto them who are truly spiritually-minded, hath more evil in it than all these things together, and that is sin. Heaven is a state of deliverance from sin, from all sin, in all the causes, concomitants and effects of it. He is no true believer unto whom sin is not the greatest burden, sorrow, and trouble. Other things, as the loss of dear relations, or extraordinary pains, may make deeper impressions on the mind by its natural affections at some seasons, than ever our sins did at any one time, in any one instance. So a man may have a greater trouble in sense of pain, by a fit of the tooth-ach, which will be gone in an hour, than in an hectic fever or consumption, which will assuredly take away his life. But take in the whole course of our lives, and all the actings of our souls in spiritual judgment as well as natural affection, and I do not understand how a man can be a sincere believer, unto whom sin is not the greatest burden and sorrow.

Wherefore in the first place it belongs unto the true notion of heaven, that it is a state wherein

in we ſhall be eternally freed from ſin, and all the concernments of it, but only the exaltation of the glory of God's grace in Chriſt, by the pardon of it. He that truly hates ſin and abhors it, whoſe principal deſire and deſign of life is to be freed from it ſo far as it is poſſible; who walks in ſelf-abaſement thro' a ſenſe of his many diſappointments, when he hoped it ſhould act in him no more, cannot as I judge but frequently betake himſelf for refreſhment unto thoughts of that ſtate wherein he ſhall be freed from it and triumph over it unto eternity. This is a notion of heaven that is eaſily apprehended and fixed on the mind, which we may dwell upon, unto the great advantage and ſatisfaction of our ſouls.

Frequent thoughts and meditations of heaven under this notion, do argue a man to be ſpiritually-minded. For it is a convincing evidence that ſin is a burden unto him, that he longs to be delivered from it and all its conſequents; that no thoughts are more welcome unto him, than thoſe of that ſtate wherein ſin ſhall be no more. And altho' men are troubled about their ſins, and would deſirouſly be freed from them, ſo far as they perplex their minds, and make their conſciences uneaſy; yet if they are not much in the proſpect of this relief, if they find not refreſhment in it, I fear their trouble is not ſuch as it ought to be. Wherefore, when men can ſo wrangle and wreſtle with their convictions of ſin, and yet take up the beſt of their relief in hopes that it will be better with them at ſome times or other in this world, without longing deſires after that ſtate wherein

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ſin ſhall be no more, they can give no evidence that they are ſpiritually-minded.

It is quite otherwiſe with ſincere believers in the exerciſe of this duty. The conſiderations of the grace and love of God, of the blood of Chriſt, of the purity and holineſs of that good Spirit that dwelleth in them, of the light, grace and mercy which they have attained thro' the promiſes of the goſpel, are thoſe which make the remainders of ſin moſt grievous and burdenſome unto them. This is that which even breaks their hearts, and makes ſome of them go mourning all the day long, namely, that any thing of that which alone God hates ſhould be found in them, or be remaining with them. It is in this condition an evidence that they are ſpiritually-minded, if together with watchful endeavours for the univerſal mortification of ſin, and utter exciſion of it both root and branch, they conſtantly add theſe thoughts of that bleſſed ſtate wherein they ſhall be abſolutely and eternally freed from all ſin, with refreſhment, delight, and complacency.

Theſe things belong unto our direction for the fixing of our thoughts and meditations on things above. This the meaneſt and weakeſt perſon who hath the leaſt ſpark of ſincerity and grace is capable of apprehending and able to practiſe. And it is that which the ſenſe they have of the evil of ſin will put them on every day, if they ſhut not their eyes againſt the light of the refreſhment that is in it. Let them who cannot ariſe in their minds unto fixed and ſtable thoughts of any other notion of theſe inviſible things, dwell on this conſideration

ſideration of them, wherein they will find no ſmall ſpiritual advantage and refreſhment unto their ſouls.

2. As unto the poſitive part of this glorious future ſtate, the thoughts and apprehenſions of men are very various. And that we may know as well what to avoid, as what to embrace, we ſhall a little reflect on ſome of them.

1. Many are able to entertain no rational conceptions about a future ſtate of bleſſedneſs and glory, no notions wherein either faith or reaſon is concented. Imaginations they have of ſomething that is great and glorious, but what it is they know not. No wonder if ſuch perſons have no delight in, no uſe of thoughts of heaven. When their imaginations have fluctuated up and down in all uncertainties for a while, they are ſwallowed up in nothing. Glorious, and therefore deſirable, they take it for granted that it muſt be. But nothing can be ſo unto them, but what is ſuitable unto their preſent diſpoſitions, inclinations and principles. And hereof there is nothing in the true ſpiritual glory of heaven, or in the eternal enjoyment of God. Theſe things are not ſuited unto the wills of their minds and of the fleſh, and therefore they cannot riſe up unto any conſtant deſires of them. Hence to pleaſe themſelves, they begin to imagine what is not. But whereas what is truly heaven pleaſeth them not, and what doth pleaſe them is not heaven, nor there to be found, they ſeldom or never endeavour in good earneſt to exerciſe their thoughts about it.

It were well if darkneſs and ignorance of the

true nature of the future ſtate and eternal glory, did not exceedingly prejudice believers themſelves, as unto their delight in them and meditations about them. They have nothing fixed or ſtated in their minds, which they can betake themſelves unto in their thoughts when they would contemplate about them. And by the way, whatever doth divert the minds of men from the power and life of ſpiritual worſhip, as do all pompous ſolemnities in the performance of it, doth greatly hinder them as unto right conceptions of our future ſtate. There was a promiſe of eternal life given unto the ſaints under the Old Teſtament: But whereas they were obliged unto a worſhip that was carnal and outwardly pompous, they never had clear and diſtinct apprehenſions of the future ſtate of glory; for life and immortality were brought to light by the goſpel. Wherefore, altho' no man living can ſee or find out the infinite riches of eternal glory; yet is it the duty of all to be acquainted with the nature of it in general, ſo as that they may have fixed thoughts of it, love unto it, earneſt deſires after it, all under its own true and proper notion.

2. So great a part of mankind as the Mahometans, unto whom God hath given all the principal and moſt deſirable parts of the world to inhabit and poſſeſs, do conceive the ſtate of future bleſſedneſs to conſiſt in the full ſatisfaction of their ſenſual luſts and pleaſures. An evidence this is, that the religion which they profeſs, hath no power or efficacy on their minds to change them from the love of ſin, or placing their happineſs

pines in fulfilling the desires of the flesh. It doth not at all enlighten their minds to discern a beauty in spiritual things, nor excite their affections unto the love of them, nor free the soul to look after blessedness in such things as alone are suited unto its rational constitution. For if it did, they would place their happiness and blessedness in them. Wherefore, it is nothing but an artifice of the god of this world, to blind the eyes of men unto their eternal destruction.

3. Some of the philosophers of old did attain an apprehension that the blessedness of men in another world doth consist in the souls full satisfaction in the goodness and beauty of the divine nature. And there is a truth in this notion which contemplative men have adorned with excellent and rational discourses. And sundry who have been and are learned among Christians, have greatly improved this truth, by the light of the scripture. From reason they take up with thoughts of the goodness, the amiableness, the self-sufficiency, the all-sufficient satisfactoriness of the infinite perfections of the divine nature. These things shine in themselves with such a glorious light, as that there is no more required unto a perception of them, but that men do not wilfully shut their eyes against it, thro' bestial sensuality and love of sin. From reason also do they frame their conceptions concerning the capacity of the souls of men for the immediate enjoyment of God, and what is suited therein unto their utmost blessedness. No more is required unto these things, but a due consideration of the nature of God

God and man, with our relation unto him and dependance on him. By the light of the scripture they frame these things into that which they call the beatifical vision, whereby they intend all the ways whereby God in the highest and immediate instances, can and doth communicate of himself unto the souls of men, and the utmost elevation of their intellectual capacities to receive those communications. It is such an intellectual apprehension of the divine nature and perfections, with ineffable love, as gives the soul the utmost rest and blessedness which its capacities can extend unto.

These things are so; and they have been by many both piously and elegantly illustrated. Howbeit they are above the capacities of ordinary Christians, they know not how to manage them in their minds, nor exercise their thoughts about them. They cannot reduce them unto present usefulness, nor make them subservient unto the exercise and encrease of grace. And the truth is, The scripture gives us another notion of heaven and glory, not contrary unto this, not inconsistent with it, but more suited unto the faith and experience of believers, and which alone can convey a true and useful sense of these things unto our minds. This therefore is diligently to be enquired into, and firmly stated in our thoughts and affections.

4. The principal notion which the scripture gives us of the state of heavenly blessedness, and which the meanest believers are capable of improving in daily practice, is, That 'faith shall be 'turned into sight, and grace into glory. We 'walk

'walk now by faith and not by sight,' saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 7. Wherefore this is the difference between our present and our future state, that sight hereafter shall supply the room of faith, 1 John iii. 2. And if sight comes into the place of faith, then the object of that sight must be the same with the present object of our faith. So the apostle informs us; 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 12. 'For, 'we know in part, and we prophesy in part; 'but when that which is perfect is come, that 'which is in part shall be done away. For now 'we see thro' a glass darkly, but then face to 'face.' Those things which we see now 'dark-'ly as in a glass,' we shall then have an immediate sight and full comprehension of; for that which is perfect must come and do away that which is in part. What then is the principal present object of faith as it is evangelical, into whose room sight must succeed? Is it not the manifestation of the glory of the infinite wisdom, grace, love, kindness and power of God in Christ, the revelation of the eternal councils of his will, and the ways of their accomplishment unto the eternal salvation of the church in and by him; with the glorious exaltation of Christ himself? Wherefore, in the full satisfactory representation of these things unto our souls, received by sight, or a direct immediate intuition of them, doth the glory of heaven principally consist. We behold them now darkly as in a glass; that is, the utmost which by faith we can attain unto; in heaven they shall be openly and fully displayed. The infinite incomprehensible excellencies of the divine nature, are

not proposed in scripture as the immediate object of our faith, nor shall they be so unto sight in heaven. The manifestation of them in Christ is the immediate object of our faith here, and shall be of our sight hereafter. Only thro' this manifestation of them we are lead even by faith ultimately to acquiesce in them; as we shall in heaven be lead by love perfectly to adhere unto them with delight ineffable. This is our immediate objective glory in heaven, we hope for no other. And this, if God will, I shall shortly more fully explain.

Whoever lives in the exercise of faith, and hath any experience of the life, power and sweetness of these heavenly things, unto whom they are a spring of grace and consolation, they are able to meditate on the glory of them in their full enjoyment. Think much of heaven, as that which will give you a perfect view and comprehension of the wisdom and love and grace of God in Christ, with those other things which shall be immediately declared.

Some perhaps will be ready to say, That if this be heaven, they can see no great glory in it, no such beauty as for which it should be desired. It may be so; for some have no instrument to take a view of invisible things but carnal imaginations. Some have no light, no principle, no disposition of mind or soul, whereunto these things are either acceptable or suitable. Some will go no further in the consideration of the divine excellencies of God, and the faculties and actings of our souls, than reason will guide them, which may be of use. But we look for no other hea-

ven, we desire none, but what we are lead unto and prepared for by the light of the gospel; that which shall perfect all the beginnings of God's grace in us; not what shall be quite of another nature and destructive of them. We value not that heaven which is equally suited unto the desires and inclinations of the worst of men as well as of the best; for we know that they who like not grace here, neither do nor can like that which is glory hereafter. No man who is not acquainted experimentally in some measure, with the life, power and evidence of faith here, hath any other heaven in his aim, but what is erected in his imagination. The glory of heaven which the gospel prepares us for, which faith leads and conducts us unto, which the souls of believers long after, as that which will give full rest, satisfaction and complacency, is the full, open, perfect manifestation of the glory of the wisdom, goodness and love of God in Christ, in his person and mediation, with the revelation of all his counsels concerning them, and the communication of their effects unto us. He that likes it not, unto whom it is not desirable, may betake himself unto Mahomet's paradise, or the philosophers speculations, in the gospel heaven he hath no interest. These are the things which we see now 'darkly 'as in glass,' by faith; in the view of them are our souls gradually changed into the likeness of God; and the comprehension of them is that which shall give us our utmost conformity and likenessunto him whereof our natures are capable. In a sense and experience of their reality and

goodness given us by the Holy Ghost, do all our spiritual consolations and joys consist. The effects produced by them in our souls are the first fruits of glory. Our light, sense, experience and enjoyment of these things however weak and frequently interrupted, our apprehensions of them however dark and obscure, are the only means whereby we are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

To have the eternal glory of God in Christ, with all the fruits of his wisdom and love, whilst we are ourselves under the full participation of the effects of them immediately, directly, revealed, proposed, made known unto us in a divine and glorious light, our souls being furnished with a capacity to behold and perfectly comprehend them, this is the heaven which according unto God's promise we look for. But as was said, these things shall be elsewhere more fully treated of.

It is true, that there are sundry other things in particular that belong unto this state of glory. But what we have mentioned is the fountain and spring of them all. We can never have an immediate enjoyment of God in the immensity of his nature, nor can any created understanding conceive any such things. God's communications of himself unto us, and our enjoyment of him, shall be in and by the manifestation of his glory in Christ. He who can see no glory, who is sensible of no blessedness in these things, is a stranger unto that heaven which the scripture reveals, and which faith leads unto.

It may be enquired, what is the subjective glory.

ry, or what change is to be wrought in ourselves that we may enjoy this glory? Now that consists principally as unto our souls in the perfection of all grace, which is initially wrought and subjectively resides in us in this world. The grace which we have here, shall not be done away as unto its essence and nature, though somewhat of it shall cease as unto the manner of its operation. What soul could think with joy of going to heaven, if thereby he must lose all his present light, faith, and love of God, though he be told that he should receive that in lieu of them, which is more excellent, whereof he hath no experience, nor can understand of what nature it is. When the saints enter into rest, their good works do follow them, and how can they do so, if their grace do not accompany them, from whence they proceed? The perfection of our present graces which are here weak, and interrupted in their operations, is a principal eminency of the state of glory. Faith shall be heightned into vision as was proved before, which doth not destroy its nature, but cause it to cease as unto its manner of operation towards things invisible. If a man have a weak small faith in this life, with little evidence, and no assurance, so that he doubts of all things, questions all things, and hath no comfort from what he doth believe; if afterwards thro' supplies of grace, he hath a mighty prevailing evidence of the things believed, is filled with comfort and assurance; this is not by a faith or grace of another kind than what he had before; but by the same faith raised unto an higher degree of perfec-

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tion. When our Saviour cured the blind man, and gave him his ſight; Mark. viii. at firſt he ſaw all things obſcurely and imperfectly, he ſaw men, as trees, walking; ver. 24. But on another application of virtue unto him, he ſaw all things clearly; ver. 25. It was not a ſight of another kind which he then received, than what he had at firſt; only its imperfection whereby he ſaw men like trees walking was taken away. Nor will our perfect viſion of things above, be a grace abſolutely of another kind from the light of faith which we here enjoy; only what is imperfect in it will be done away, and it will be made meet for the preſent enjoyment of things here, at a diſtance, and inviſible. Love ſhall have its perfection alſo, and the leaſt alteration in its manner of operation of any grace whatever. And there is nothing that ſhould more excite us to labour after a growth in love to God in Chriſt, than this, that it ſhall to all eternity be the ſame in its nature, and in all its operations, only both the one and the other man be made abſolutely perfect. The ſoul will by it be enabled to cleave unto God unchangeably, with eternal delight, ſatisfaction and complacency. Hope ſhall be perfect in enjoyment, which is all the perfection it is capable of. So ſhall it be as unto other graces.

This ſubjective perfection of our natures, eſpecially in all the faculties, powers, and affections of our ſouls, and all their operations, belongs unto our bleſſedneſs, nor can we be bleſſed without it. All the objective glory in heaven would not in our beholding and enjoyment of it (if it were poſ-

possible) make us blessed and happy, if our own natures were not made perfect, freed from all disorder, irregular motions and weak imperfect operations. What is it then that must give our nature this subjective perfection? It is that grace alone whose beginnings we are here made partakers of. For therein consists the renovation of the image of God in us. And the perfect communication of that image unto us, is the absolute perfection of our natures; the utmost which their capacity is suited unto. And this gives us the last thing to be enquired into, namely, By what means in ourselves we shall eternally abide in that state. And this is by the unalterable adherence of our whole souls unto God, in perfect love and delight. This is that whereby alone the soul reacheth unto the essence of God, and the infinite incomprehensible perfections of his nature. For the perfect nature hereof, divine revelation hath left it under a vail, and so must we do also. Nor do I designedly handle these things in this place, but only in the way of a direction how to exercise our thoughts about them.

This is that notion of heaven which those who are spiritually-minded ought to be conversant withal. And the true stating of it by faith, is a discriminating character of believers. This is no heaven unto any others. Those who have not an experience of the excellency of these things in their initial state in this world, and their incomparable transcendency unto all other things, cannot conceive how heavenly glory and blessedness should consist in them. Unskilful men may cast

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away rough unwrought diamonds as useless stones; they know not what polishing will bring them unto. Nor do men unskilful in the mysteries of godliness, judge there can be any glory in rough unwrought grace; they know not what lustre and beauty the polishing of the heavenly hand will give unto it.

It is generally supposed that however men differ in and about religion here, yet they agree well enough about heaven, they would all go to the same heaven. But it is a great mistake, they differ in nothing more; they would not all go to the same heaven. How few are they who value that heavenly state which we have treated of; or do understand how any blessedness can consist in the enjoyment of it? But this and no other heaven would we go unto. Other notions there may be, there are of it, which being but fruits and effects of mens own imaginations, the more they dwell in the contemplation of them, the more carnal they may grow, at best the more superstitious. But spiritual thoughts of this heaven, consisting principally in freedom from all sin, in the perfection of all grace, in the vision of the glory of God in Christ, and all the excellencies of the divine nature as manifested in him, are an effectual means for the improvement of spiritual life, and the encrease of all grace in us. For they cannot but effect an assimulation in the mind and heart unto the things contemplated on, where the principles and seeds of them are already inlaid and begun. This is our first direction.

Secondly, Having fixed right notions and apprehensions

prehenſions of heavenly things in our minds, it is our duty to think and contemplate greatly on them, and our own concernment in them. Without this all our ſpeculations concerning the nature of eternal things, will be of no uſe unto us. And unto your encouragement and direction, take theſe few ſhort rules relating unto this duty. (1.) Here lies the great trial whether we are ſpiritually-minded or no, by virtue of this rule; 'If we are riſen 'with Chriſt, we will mind the things that are a-'bove,' Col. iii. 3. (2.) Here lies the great means whereby we may attain further degrees in that bleſſed frame of mind, if it be already formed in us, by virtue of that rule; 'Beholding the glory 'of God as in a glaſs, we are changed into the 'ſame image from glory to glory, 2 Cor. iii. 18. (3.) Here lies the great evidence whether we have a real intereſt in the things above or no; whether we place our portion and bleſſedneſs in them, by virtue of that rule; 'Where our treaſure is, there 'will our hearts be alſo. Are they our treaſure, our portion, our reward, in compariſon whereof all other things are but loſs and dung? we ſhall aſſuredly be converſant in our minds about them. (4.) It cannot be imagined, that a man ſhould have in him a principle cognate and ſuited unto things above, of the ſame kind and nature with them, that his ſoul ſhould be under the conduct of thoſe habits of grace, which ſtrive and naturally tend unto perfection, labouring greatly here under the weight of their own weakneſſes, as it is with all who are truly ſpiritually-minded, and yet not have his thoughts greatly exerciſed about theſe things, 1 John iii. 3. It

It were well if we would try ourselves by things of so uncontroulable evidence. What can any object unto the truth of these things, or the necessity of this duty? If it be otherwise with us, it is from one of these two causes; either we are not convinced of the truth and reality of them, or we have no delight in them, because we are not spiritually-minded. Do we think that men may turmoil themselves in earthly thoughts all the day long, and when they are freed of their affairs, betake themselves unto those that are vain and useless, without any stated converse with things above, and yet enjoy life and peace? We must take other measures of things, if we intend to live unto God, to be like him, and to come unto the enjoyment of him.

What is the matter with men that they are so stupid? They all generally desire to go to heaven, at least when they can live here no longer. Some indeed have no other regard unto it, but only they would not go to hell. But most would die the death of the righteous, and have their latter end like his, yet few there are who endeavour to attain a right notion of it, to try how it is suited unto their principles and desires; but content themselves with such general notions of it as please their imaginations. It is no wonder if such persons seldom exercise their minds or thoughts about it, nor do they so much as pretend to be spiritually-minded. But as for those who are instructed in these things, who profess their chiefest interest to ly in them, not to abound in meditation

tion concerning them, it argues indeed that whatever they profess, they are earthly and carnal.

Again; Meditate and think of the glory of heaven, so as to compare with it the opposite state of death and eternal misery. Few men care to think much of hell, and the everlasting torments of the wicked therein. Those do so least, who are in most danger of falling thereinto. They put far from them the evil day, and suppose their covenant with death and hell to be sure. Some begin to advance an opinion that there is no such place, because it is their interest and desire that there should be none. Some out of profaneness make a scoff at it, as tho' a future judgment were but a fable. Most seem to think that there is a severity in thoughts about it, which it is not fit we should be too much terrified withal. Some transient thoughts they will have of it, but not suffer them to abide in their minds, lest they should be too much discomposed. Or they think it not not consistent with the goodness of Christ to leave any men in that condition; whereas there is more spoken directly of hell, its torments, and their eternity, by himself, than in all the scripture besides. These thoughts in most proceed from an unwillingness to be troubled in their sins, and are useful unto none. It is the height of folly for men to endeavour the hiding of themselves for a few moments from that which is inavoidably coming upon them unto eternity; and the due consideration whereof, is a means for an escape from it. But I speak only of true believers. And the more they are conversant in their thoughts about

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the future state of eternal misery, the greater evidence they have of the life and confidence of faith. It is a necessary duty to consider it, as what we were by nature obnoxious unto, as being children of wrath; what we have deserved by our personal sins, as the wages of sin is death; what we are delivered from through Jesus the deliverer who saves us from the wrath to come; what expression it is of the indignation of God against sin, who hath prepared this Tophet of old; that we may be delivered from sin, kept up to an abhorrency of it, walking in humility, self-abasement, and the admiration of divine grace. This therefore is required of us, that in our thoughts and meditations, we compare the state of blessedness and eternal glory, as a free and absolute effect of the grace of God in and thro' Christ Jesus, with that state of eternal misery, which we had deserved. And if there be any spark of grace or of holy thankfulness in our hearts, it will be stirred up unto its due exercise.

Some it may be will say, that they complained before that they cannot get their minds fixed on these things. Weakness, weariness, darkness, diversions, occasions, do pervalently obstruct their abiding in such thoughts. I shall speak further unto this afterwards, at present I shall only suggest two things. (1.) If you cannot attain, yet continue to follow after; get your minds in a perpetual endeavour after an abode in spiritual thoughts. Let your minds be rising towards them every hour, yea, an hundred times a-day, on all occasions, on a continual sense of duty; and sigh with-

within yourselves for deliverance, when you find disappointments, or not a continuance in them. It is the sense of that place, Rom. viii. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. (2.) Take care you go not backwards, and lose what you have wrought. If you neglect these things for a season, you will quickly find yourselves neglected by them. So I observe it every day in the hearing of the word. Whilst persons keep up themselves to a diligent attendance on it, where they find it preached unto their edification, they find great delight in it, and will undergo great difficulties for the enjoyment of it: Let them be diverted from it for a season, after a while it grows indifferent unto them, any thing will satisfy them that pretends unto the same duty.

## CHAP. VII.

*Especial objects of Spiritual Thoughts on the Glorious State of Heaven, and what belongs thereunto. First, Of Christ himself. Thoughts of Heavenly Glory, in opposition unto Thoughts of Eternal Misery. The use of such Thoughts. Advantage in Sufferings.*

IT will be unto our advantage having stated right notions of the glory of the blessed state above in our minds, to fix on some particulars belonging unto it, as the especial object of our thoughts and meditations. As, (1.) Think much

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of him who unto us is the life and center of all the glory of heaven, that is, Christ himself. I shall be very brief in treating hereof, because I have designed a peculiar treatise on this subject, of beholding the glory of Christ both here and unto eternity. At present therefore a few things only shall be mentioned, because on this occasion they are not to be omitted. The whole of the glory of the state above is expressed by 'being 'ever with the Lord; where he is, to behold his 'glory.' For in and through him is the beatifical manifestation of God and his glory made for evermore. And thro' him are all communications of inward glory unto us. The present resplendency of heavenly glory, consists in his mediatory ministry, as I have at large elsewhere declared. And he will be the means of all glorious communications between God and the church unto eternity. Wherefore if we are spiritually-minded, we should fix our thoughts on Christ above, as the center of all heavenly glory. To help us herein, we may consider the things that follow.

(1.) Faith hath continual recourse unto him on the account of what he did and suffered for us in this world. For thereon, pardon of sin, justification and peace with God do depend. This ariseth in the first place from a sense of our own wants. But love of him is no less necessary unto us than faith in him. And altho' we have powerful motives unto love, from what he did, and was in this world, yet the formal reason of our adherence unto him thereby is what he is in himself, as he is now exalted in heaven. If we re-

rejoice not at the remembrance of his present glory, if the thoughts of it be not frequent with us, and refreshing unto us, how dwelleth his love in us?

(2.) Our hope is that ere long we shall be ever with him. And if so, it is certainly our wisdom and duty to be here with him as much as we can. It is a vain thing for any to suppose, that they place their chiefest happiness in being for ever in the presence of Christ, who care not at all to be with him here as they may. And the only way of our being present with him here, is by faith and love, acting themselves in spiritual thoughts and affections. And it is an absurd thing for men to esteem themselves Christians, who scarce think of Christ all the day long. Yet some, as one complained of old, scarce ever think or speak of him but when they swear by his name. I have read of them who have lived and died in continual contemplation on him, so far as the imperfection of our present state will admit. I have known them, I do know them, who call themselves unto a reproof, if, at any time, he hath been many minutes out of their thoughts. And it is strange that it should be otherwise with them who love him in sincerity; yet I wish I did not know more, who give evidences that it is a rare thing for them to be exercised in serious thoughts and meditations about him. Yea, there are some who are not averse upon occasions to speak of God, of mercy, of pardon, of his power and goodness, who, if you mention Christ unto them, with any thing of faith, love, trust in him, they

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seem unto them as a strange thing. Few there are who are sensible of any religion beyond what is natural. The things of the wisdom and power of God in Christ, are foolishness unto them. Take some directions for the discharge of this duty. (1.) In your thoughts of Christ be very careful that they are conceived and directed according to the rule of the word, lest you deceive your own souls, and give up the conduct of your affections unto vain imaginations. Spiritual notions befalling carnal minds, did once by the means of superstition ruin the power of religion. A conviction men had, that they must think much of Jesus Christ, and that this would make them conformable unto him; but having no real evangelical faith, nor the wisdom of faith to exercise it in their thoughts and affections in a due manner, nor understanding what it was to be truly like unto him, they gave up themselves unto many foolish inventions and imaginations; by which they thought to express their love and conformity unto him. They would have images of him which they would embrace, adore, and bedew with their tears. They would have crucifixes as they called them, which they would carry about them, and wear next unto their hearts, as if they resolved to lodge Christ always in their bosoms. They would go in pilgrimage to the place where he died and rose again, thro' a thousand dangers; and purchase a feigned chip of a tree whereon he suffered, at the price of all they had in the world. They would endeavour by long thoughtfulness, fastings and watches, to cast their souls into rap-

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tures and extasies, wherein they fancied themselves in his presence. They came at last to make themselves like him, in getting impressions of wounds, on their sides, their hands and feet. Unto all these things and sundry others of an alike nature and tendency, did superstition abuse and corrupt the minds of men, from a pretence of a principle of truth; for there is no more certain gospel truth than this, that believers ought continually to contemplate on Christ, by the actings of faith in their thoughts and affections; and that thereby they are changed and transformed into his image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. And we are not to forego our duty, because other men have been mistaken in theirs; nor part with practical fundamental principles of religion, because they have been abused by superstition. But we may see herein, how dangerous it is to depart in any thing from the conduct of scripture light and rule, when for want thereof, the best and most noble endeavours of the minds of men, even to love Christ, and to be like unto him, do issue in provocations of the highest nature.

Pray therefore that you may be kept unto the truth in all things, by a diligent attendance unto the only rule thereof, and conscientious subjection of soul unto the authority of God in it. For we ought not to suffer our affections to be entangled with the paint or artificial beauty of any way or means of giving our love unto Christ, which are not warranted by the word of truth. Yet I must say, that I had rather be among them who, in the actings of their love and affection

unto Christ, do fall into some irregularities and excesses in the manner of expressing it (provided their worship of him be neither superstitious nor idolatrous) than among those who professing themselves to be Christians, do almost disavow their having any thoughts of, or affection unto, the person of Christ: But there is no need that we should foolishly run into either of these extreams. God hath in the scripture sufficiently provided against them both. He hath both shewed us the necessity of our diligent acting of faith and love on the person of Christ, and hath limited out the way and means whereby we may so do: And let our designs be what they will, where in any thing we depart from his prescriptions, we are not under the conduct of his Spirit, and so are sure to lose all that we do.

Wherefore, Two things are required that we may thus think of Christ and meditate on him according to the mind and will of God. (1.) That the means of bringing him to mind, be what God hath promised and appointed. (2.) That the continued proposal of him as the object of our thoughts and meditations be of the same kind. For both these ends, the superstitious minds of men invented the ways of images and crucifixes, with their appurtenances before mentioned. And this rendred all their devotion an abomination. That which tends unto these ends among believers, is the promise of the Spirit; and the institutions of the word. Would you then think of Christ as you ought; take these two directions. (1.) Pray that the holy Spirit may abide with you continually

ally to mind you of him, which he will do in all in whom he doth abide; for it belongs unto his office. (2.) For more fixed thoughts and meditations; take ſome expreſs place of ſcripture, wherein he is ſet forth and propoſed, either in his perſon, office, or grace unto you, Gal. iii. 1.

4. This duty lies at the foundation of all that bleſſed communion and intercourſe, that is between Jeſus Chriſt, and the ſouls of believers. This I confeſs is deſpiſed by ſome, and the very notion of it eſteemed ridiculous. But they do therein no leſs than renounce Chriſtianity, and turn the Lord Chriſt into an idol, that neither knoweth, ſeeth, nor heareth. But I ſpeak unto them who are not utter ſtrangers unto the life of faith, who know not what religion is, unleſs they have real ſpiritual intercourſe and communion with the Lord Chriſt thereby. Conſider this therefore as it is in particular exemplified in the book of Canticles. There is not one inſtance of it to be found, which doth not ſuppoſe a continual thoughtfulneſs of him. And in anſwer unto them, as they are actings of faith and love wherein he is delighted, doth he by his Spirit inſinuate into our minds and hearts, a gracious ſenſe of his own love, kindneſs and relation unto us. The great variety wherein theſe things are mutually carried on between him and the church, the ſingular endearments which enſue thereon, and bleſſed eſtate in reſt and complacency, do make up the ſubſtance of that holy diſcourſe. No thoughts then of Chriſt, proceeding from faith, accompanied with love and delight, ſhall be loſt: They that ſow this

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seed shall return with their sheaves; Christ will meet them with gracious intimations of his acceptance of them, delight in them, and return a sense of his own love unto them. He never will be, he never was behind with any poor soul in returns of love. Those gracious and blessed promises which he hath made of coming unto them that believe in him, of making his abode with them, and of supping with them, all expressions of a gracious presence and intimate communion, do all depend on this duty. Wherefore we may consider three things concerning these thoughts of Christ. (1.) That they are exceeding acceptable unto him, as the best pledges of our cordial affection. Cant. ii. 14. 'O my dove that art in 'the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the 'stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear 'thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.' When a soul thro' manifold discouragements and despondencies withdraws, and as it were, hides itself from him, he calleth to see a poor weeping, blubbered face, and to hear a broken voice, that scarce goes beyond sighs and groans. (2.) These thoughts are the only means, whereby we comply with the gracious intimations of his love mentioned before. By them do we hear his knocking, know his voice, and open the door of our hearts to give him entrance, that he may abide and sup with us. Sometimes indeed the soul is surprized into acts of gracious communion with Christ, Cant. vi. 11. But they are not to be expected unless we abide in those ways and means which prepare and make our souls meet

for the reception and entertainment of him. Wherefore, (3.) Our want of experience in the power of this holy intercourſe and communion with Chriſt, ariſeth principally from our defect in this duty. I have known one who, after a long profeſſion of faith and holineſs, fell into great darkneſs and diſtreſs, merely on this account, that he did not experience in himſelf, the ſweetneſs, life, and power of the teſtimonies given concerning the real communications of the love of Chriſt unto, and the intimation of his preſence with believers. He knew well enough the doctrine of it, but did not feel the power of it; at leaſt he underſtood there was more in it, than he had experience of. God carried him by faith thro' that darkneſs; but taught him withal, that no ſenſe of theſe things was to be let into the ſoul, but by conſtant thoughtfulneſs and contemplations on Chriſt. How many bleſſed viſits do we loſe, by not being exerciſed unto this duty. See Cant. v. 1, 2, 3. Sometimes we are buſy, ſometimes careleſs and negligent, ſometimes ſlothful, ſometimes under the power of temptations, ſo that we neither enquire after, nor are ready to receive them. This is not the way to have our joys abound.

Again, I ſpeak now with eſpecial reſpect unto him in heaven. The glory of his preſence, as God and man eternally united; the diſcharge of his mediatory office as he is at the right hand of God; the glory of his preſent acting for the church, as he is the miniſter of the ſanctuary, and the true tabernacle which God hath fixed,

and not man, the love, power and efficacy of his intercession, whereby he takes care for the accomplishment of the salvation of the church, the approach of his glorious coming unto judgment, are to be the objects of our daily thoughts and meditations.

Let us not mistake ourselves. To be spiritually-minded is not to have the notions and knowledge of spiritual things in our minds; it is not to be constant, no not to abound in the performance of duties, both which may be where there is no grace in the heart at all. It is to have our minds really exercised with delight about heavenly things, the things that are above, especially Christ himself as at the right hand of God.

Again; So think of eternal things as continually to lay them in the ballance against all the sufferings of this life. This use of it I have spoken unto somewhat before; and it is necessary it should be pressed upon all occasions. It is very probable that we shall yet suffer more than we have done. Those who have gone before us, have done so; it is foretold in the scripture, that if we will 'live godly in Christ Jesus we must do 'so;' we stand in need of it, and the world is prepared to bring it on us. And as we must suffer, so it is necessary unto the glory of God, and our own salvation, that we suffer in a due manner. Mere sufferings will neither commend us unto God, nor any way advantage our own souls. When we 'suffer according to the will of God,' it is an eminent grace, gift and privilege, Phil. i. 29. But many things are required hereunto. It

is not enough that men suppose themselves to suffer for conscience sake, tho' if we do not so, all our sufferings are in vain. Nor is it enough that we suffer for this or that way of profession in religion, which we esteem to be true, and according to the mind of God, in opposition unto what is not so. The glory of sufferings on these accounts solely, hath been much sullied in the days wherein we live. It is evident that persons out of a natural courage, accompanied with deep radicate persuasions, and having their minds influenced with some sinister ends, may undergo things hard and difficult, in giving testimony unto what is not according to the mind of God. Examples we have had hereof in all ages, and in that wherein we live in an especial manner. See 1 Pet. iv. 14, 15, 16. We have had enough to take off all paint and appearance of honour from them who in their sufferings are deceived in what they profess. But men may, from the same principles, suffer for what is indeed according to the mind of God, yea, may give their bodies to be burned therein, and yet not to his glory, nor their own eternal advantage. Wherefore we are duly to consider all things that are requisite to make our sufferings acceptable unto God, and honourable unto the gospel.

I have observed in many a frame of spirit with respect unto sufferings, that I never saw good event of when it was tried to the uttermost. Boldness, confidence, a pretended contempt of hardships, and scorning other men whom they suppose defective in these things, are the garments or li-

very they wear on this occasion. Such principles may carry men out in a bad cause, they will never do so in a good. Evangelical truth will not be honourably witnessed unto, but by evangelical graces. Distrust of ourselves, a due apprehension of the nature of the evils to be undergone, and of our own frailty, with continual prayers to be delivered from them, or supported under them, and prudent care to avoid them, without an inroad on conscience, or neglect of duty, are much better preparations for an entrance into a state of suffering. Many things belong unto our learning aright this first and last lesson of the gospel, namely, Of bearing the cross, or undergoing all sorts of sufferings for the profession of it. But they belong not unto our present occasion. This only is that which we now press, as an evidence of our sincerity in our sufferings, and an effectual means to enable us chearfully to undergo them, which is to have such a continual prospect of the future state of glory, so as to lay it in the balance against all that we may undergo. For,

(1.) To have our minds filled and possessed with thoughts thereof, will give us an alacrity in our entrance into sufferings in a way of duty. Other considerations will offer themselves unto our relief, which will quickly fade and disappear. They are like a cordial water which gives a little relief for a season, and then leaves the spirits to sink beneath what they were before it was taken. Some relieve themselves from the consideration of the nature of their sufferings; they are not so great, but that they may conflict with them, and

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come off with safety. But there is nothing of that kind so small, which will not prove too hard and strong for us, unless we have especial assistance. Some do the same from their duration; they are but for ten days or six months, and then they shall be free. Some from the compassion and esteem of men. These, and the like considerations, are apt to occur unto the minds of all sorts of persons, whether they are spiritually-minded or no. But when our minds are accustomed unto thoughts of the glory that shall be revealed, we shall chearfully entertain every way and path that leads thereunto; as suffering for the truth doth in a peculiar manner. Thro' this medium we may look chearfully and comfortably on the loss of name, reputation, goods, liberty, life itself; as knowing in ourselves that we have better and more abiding comforts to betake ourselves unto. And we can no other way glorify God by our alacrity in the entrance of sufferings, than when it ariseth from a prospect into, and valuation of those invisible things which he hath promised, as an abundant recompence for all we can lose in this world.

2. The great aggravation of sufferings is their long continuance, without any rational appearance or hopes of relief. Many who have entred into sufferings with much courage and resolution, have been wearied and worn out with their continuance. Elijah himself was hereby reduced to pray that God would take away his life, to put an end unto his ministry and calamities. And not a few, in all ages, have been hereby so broken in their natural

tural spirits, and so shaken in the exercise of faith, as that they have lost the glory of their confession, in seeking deliverance by sinful compliances in the denial of the truth. And altho' this may be done out of mere weariness, (as it is the design of Satan 'to wear out the saints of the most High') with reluctance of mind, and a love yet remaining unto the truth in their hearts, yet hath it constantly one of these two effects. Some by the overwhelming sorrow that befals them on the account of their failure in profession, and out of a deep sense of their unkindness unto the Lord Jesus, are stirred up immediately unto higher acts of confession than ever they were before engaged in, and unto an higher provocation of their adversaries, until their former troubles are doubled upon them, which they frequently undergo with great satisfaction. Instances of this nature occur in all stories of great persecutions. Others being cowed and discouraged in their profession, and perhaps neglected by them whose duty it was rather to restore them, have by the craft of Satan given place to their declensions, and become vile apostates. To prevent these evils arising from the duration of sufferings, without a prospect of deliverance, nothing is more prevalent than a constant contemplation on the future reward and glory. So the apostle declares it; Heb. xi. 35. When the mind is filled with the thoughts of the unseen glories of eternity, it hath in readiness what to lay in the ballance against the longest continuance and duration of sufferings, which

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in comparison thereunto, at their utmost extent, are but for a moment.

I have insisted the longer on these things, because they are the peculiar object of the thoughts of them that are indeed spiritually-minded.

## CHAP. VIII.

*Spiritual Thoughts of God himself. The opposition unto them, and neglect of them, with their causes, and the way of their prevalency. Predominant Corruptions expelling due Thoughts of God, how to be discovered,* &c. *Thoughts of God, of what nature, and what they are to be accompanied withal,* &c.

I Have spoken very briefly unto the first particular instance of the heavenly things, that we are to fix our thoughts upon, namely, The person of Christ. I have done it on the reason before-mentioned, namely, That I intend a peculiar treatise on that subject, or an enquiry how we may behold the glory of Christ in this life, and how we shall do so unto eternity. That which I have reserved unto the last place as unto the exercise of their thoughts about, who are spiritually-minded, is that which is the absolute foundation and spring of all spiritual things; namely, God himself. He is the fountain whence all these things proceed, and the ocean wherein they issue;

he is their center and circumference wherein they all begin, meet and end. So the apostle issues his profound discourse of the councils of the divine will, and mysteries of the gospel, Rom. xi. 36. 'Of him, and thro' him, and to him are 'all things, to whom be glory for ever.' All things arise from his power, are all disposed by his wisdom into a tendency unto his glory; 'of him, 'and through him, and to him are all things.' Under that consideration alone are they to be the objects of our spiritual meditations, namely, As they come from him, and tend unto him. All other things are finite and limited; but they begin and end in that which is immense and infinite. So 'God is All in All.' He therefore is, or ought to be, the only supream absolute object of our thoughts and desires; other things are from and for him only. Where our thoughts do not either immediately and directly, or mediately and by just consequence tend unto and end in him, they are not spiritual, 1 Pet. i. 21.

To make way for directions how to exercise our thoughts on God himself, some things must be premised concerning a sinful defect herein, with the causes of it.

First, It is the great character of a man presumptuously and flagitiously wicked, that 'God is 'not in all his thoughts. Psal. x. 4. That is, 'He is in none of them.' And of this want of thoughts of God there are many degrees; for all wicked men are not equally so forgetful of him.

1st. Some are under the power of Atheistical thoughts: They deny, or question, or do not avowedly

vowedly acknowledge the very being of God. This is the height of what the enmity of the carnal mind can rise unto. To acknowledge God, and yet to refuse to be subject to his law or will, a man would think were as bad, if not worse, than to deny the being of God. But it is not so. That is a rebellion against his authority, this an hatred unto the only fountain of all goodness, truth and being; and that because they cannot own it, but withal they must acknowledge it to be infinitely righteous, holy and powerful, which would destroy all their desires and security. Such may be the person in the Psalm; for the words may be read, 'All his thoughts are, that there is 'no God.' Howbeit the context describes him as one who rather despiseth his providence, than denieth his being. But such there are whom the same Psalmist elsewhere brands for fools, tho' themselves seem to suppose that wisdom was born and will die with them, Psal. xiv. 1. Psal. liii. 1.

It may be never any age since the Flood, did more abound with open Atheism, among such as pretended unto the use and improvement of reason, than that wherein we live. Among the ancient civilized heathen, we hear ever and anon of a person branded for an Atheist; yet are not certain whether it was done justly or no. But in all nations of Europe at this day, cities, courts, towns, fields, armies, abound with persons, who, if any credit may be given unto what they say or do, believe not that there is a God. And the reason hereof may be a little enquired into.

Now this is no other in general, but that men

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have decocted and wasted the light and power of Christian religion. It is the fullest revelation of God, that ever he made, it is the last that ever he will make in this world. If this be despised, if men rebel against the light of it, if they break the cords of it, and are senseless of its power, nothing can preserve them from the highest Atheism that the nature of man is capable of. It is in vain to expect relief or preservation from inferior means, where the highest and most noble is rejected. Reason or the light of nature gives evidences unto the being of God; and arguments are still well pleaded from them to the confusion of Atheists. And they were sufficient to retain men in an acknowledgment of the divine power and Godhead, who had no other, no higher evidences of them. But where men have had the benefit of divine revelation, where they have been educated in the principles of Christian religion, have had some knowledge, and made some profession of them; and have through the love of sin, and hatred of every thing that is truly good, rejected all convictions from them concerning the being, power and love of God, they will not be kept unto a confession of them, by any considerations that the light of nature can suggest.

There are therefore among others, three reasons why there are more Atheists among them who live where the Christian religion is professed, and the power of it rejected, than among any other sort of men, even than there were among the Heathens themselves.

1. God hath designed ' to magnify his word

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'above all his name,' or all other ways of the revelation of himself unto the children of men, Psalm cxxxviii. 2. Where therefore this is rejected and despised, he will not give the honour unto reason, or the light of nature, that they shall preserve the minds of men from any evil whatever. Reason shall not have the same power and efficacy on the minds of men, who reject the light and power of divine revelation by the word; as it hath, or may have, on them whose best guide it is, who never enjoyed the light of the gospel. And therefore there is oft-times more common honesty among civilized Heathens and Mahometans than among degenerate Christians. And, from the same reason, the children of professors are sometimes irrecoverably profligate. It will be said, many are recovered unto God by afflictions, who have despised the word. But it is otherwise; never any were converted unto God by afflictions who had rejected the word. Men may by afflictions be recalled unto the light of the word, but none are immediately turned unto God by them. As a good shepherd when a sheep wanders from the flock, and will not hear his call, sends out his dog, which stops him and bites him. Hereon he looks about him, and hearing the call of the shepherd, returns again to the flock, Job xxxiii. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25. But with this sort of persons, it is the way of God, that where the principal means of the revelation of himself, and wherein he doth most glorify his wisdom and his goodness, is despised, he will not only take off the efficacy of inferior means, but judicially

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harden the hearts and blind the eyes of men, that such means ſhall be of no uſe unto them. See Iſa. vi. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Acts xiii. 40, 41. Rom. i. 21, 28, 2 Theſſ. ii. 11, 12.

2. The contempt of goſpel light and Chriſtian religion, as it is ſupernatural, (which is the beginning of trangreſſion unto all Atheiſts among us) begets in, and leaves on the mind ſuch a depraved, corrupt habit, ſuch a congeries of all evils, that the hatred of the goodneſs, wiſdom and grace of God can produce; that it cannot but be wholly inclined unto the worſt of evils, as all our original vitious inclinations ſucceeded immediately on our rejection and loſs of the image of God. The beſt things corrupted, yield the worſt ſavour; as manna ſtank and bred worms. The knowledge of the goſpel being rejected, ſtinking worms take the place of it in the mind, which grow into vipers and ſcorpions. Every degree of apoſtacy from goſpel-truth, brings in a proportionate degree of inclination unto wickedneſs into the hearts and minds of men, 2 Pet. ii. 21. And that which is total, unto all the evils that they are capable of in this world. Whereas therefore multitudes from their darkneſs, unbelief, temptation, love of ſin, pride and contempt of God, do fall off from all ſubjection of ſoul and conſcience unto the goſpel, either notionally or practically, deriding or deſpiſing all ſupernatural revelations; they are a thouſand times more diſpoſed unto down-right Atheiſm, than perſons who never had the light or benefit of ſuch revelations. Take heed of decays. Whatever ground the goſpel

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[illegible] minds, sin possesseth it for its [illegible] its own ends.

Let none say, it is otherwise with them. Men grow cold and negligent in the duties of gospel worship, public and private; which is to reject gospel light. Let them say and pretend what they please, that in other things, in their minds and conversations, it is well with them; indeed it is not so. Sin will, sin doth one way or other, make an encrease in them proportionate unto these decays; and will sooner or later discover itself so to do. And themselves if they are not utterly hardened, may greatly discover it, inwardly in their peace, or outwardly in their lives.

3. Where men are resolved not to see, the greater the light is that shines about them, the faster they must close their eyes. All Atheism springs from a resolution not to see things invisible and eternal. Love of sin, a resolved continuance in the practice of it, the effectual power of vicious inclinations, in opposition unto all that is good, make it the interest of such men that there should be no God to call them to an account. For a supream unavoidable judge, an eternal rewarder of good and evil, is inseparable from the first notion of a divine being. Whereas therefore the most glorious light and uncontrollable evidence of these things shines forth in the scripture; men that will abide by their interest, to love and live in sin, must close their eyes with all the arts and powers that they have, or else they will pierce into their minds unto their torment. This they do by down-right Atheism, which alone pretends to give them se-

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curity against the light of divine revelation. A-gainst all other convictions, they might take shelter from their fears, under less degrees of it.

It is not therefore unto the disparagement but honour of the gospel, that so many avow themselves to be Atheists, in those places wherein the truth of it is known and professed. For none can have the least inclination or temptation thereunto, until they have before hand rejected the gospel, which immediately exposeth them unto the worst of evils.

Nor is there any means for the recovery of such persons. The opposition that hath been made unto Atheism with arguments for the divine being and existence of God, taken from reason and natural light, in this and other ages, hath been of good use to cast contempt on the pretences of evil men, to justify themselves in their folly. But that they have so much as changed the minds of any, I much doubt. No man is under the power of Atheistical thoughts, or can be so long, but he that is insnared into them by his desire to live securely and uncontrollably in sin. Such persons know it to be their interest, that there should be no God, and are willing to take shelter under the bold expressions and reasonings of them, who, by the same means, have hardened and blinded their minds into such foolish thoughts. But the most rational arguments for the being of the Deity, will never prove an effectual cure unto a predominant love of, and habitual course in sin, in them who have resisted and rejected the means and motives unto that end, declared in divine revelation. And,

unless the love of sin be cured in the heart, thoughts in the acknowledgment of God, will not be fixed in the mind.

2dly, There are those of whom also it may be said, 'That God is not in all their thoughts,' tho' they acknowledge his essence and being. For they are not practically influenced in any thing by the notions they have of him. Such is the person of whom this is affirmed; Psalm. x. 4. He is one who thro' pride and profligacy with hardness in sin, regards not God in the rule of the world, ver. 4, 5, 11, 13. Such is the world filled withal at this day, as they are described, Tit. i. 16. 'They profess that they know God, but 'in their works deny him, being abominable and 'disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.' They think, they live, they act, in all things, as if there were no God, at least, as if they never thought of him with fear and reverence. And, for the most part, we need not seek far for evidences of their disregard of God; the pride of their countenances testify against them, Psal. x. 4. And if they are followed further, cursed oaths, licentiousness of life, and hatred of all that is good, will confirm and evidence the same. Such as these may own God in words, may be afraid of him in dangers, may attend outwardly on his worship but they think not of God at all in a due manner; he is not in all their thoughts.

3dly, There are yet less degrees of this disregard of God and forgetfulness of him. Some are so filled with thoughts of the world, and the occasions of life, that it is impossible they should

think of God as they ought. For as the love of God, and the love of the world in prevalent degrees are inconsistent, (' For if a man loveth this ' world, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" so thoughts of God and of the world, in the like degree, are inconsistent. This is the state of many who yet would be esteemed spiritually-minded. They are continually conversant in their minds about earthly things. Some things impose themselves on them under the notion of duty: They belong unto their callings, they must be attended unto: Some are suggested unto their minds from daily occasions and occurrences. Common converse in the world ingageth men into no other but worldly thoughts: Love and desire of earthly things, their enjoyments and encrease, exhaust the vigour of their spirits all the day long. In the midst of a multitude of thoughts arising from these, and the like occasions, whilst their hearts and heads are reeking with the steam of them, many fall immediately in their seasons unto the performance of holy duties. Those times must suffice for thoughts of God. But notwithstanding such duties, what thro' the want of a due preparation for them, what thro' the fulness of their minds and affections, with other things, and what thro' a neglect of exercising grace in them, it may be said comparatively, that ' God is not in all their thoughts.'

I pray God, that this, at least as unto some degrees of it, be not the condition of many among us. I speak not now of men who visibly and openly live in sin, profane in their principles, and profligate in their lives. The prayers of such per-

persons are an abomination unto the Lord; neither have they ever any thoughts of him, which he doth accept: But I speak of them who are sober in their lives, industrious in their callings, and not openly negligent about the outward duties of religion. Such men are apt to approve of themselves, and others also to speak well of them; for these things are in themselves commendable and praise-worthy. But if they are traced home, it will be found, as to many of them, that 'God 'is not in all their thoughts' as he ought to be. Their earthly conversation, their vain communication, with their foolish designs, do all manifest that the vigour of their spirits, and most intense contrivances of their minds, are engaged into things below. Some refuse, transient, unmanaged thoughts are sometimes cast away on God, which he despiseth.

4thly, Where persons do cherish secret predominant lusts in their hearts and lives, God is not in their thoughts as he ought to be. He may be, he often is, much in the words of such persons, but in their thoughts he is not, he cannot be in a due manner: And such persons no doubt there are. Ever and anon, we hear of one and another whose secret lusts break forth into a discovery. They flatter themselves for a season, but God oft-times so orders things in his holy providence, that their 'iniquity shall be found out to 'be hateful.' Some hateful lust discovers itself to be predominant in them. One is drunken, another unclean, a third an oppressor. Such there were ever found among professors of the gospel,

and that in the best of times; among the apostles one was a traytor, a devil. Of the first professors of Christianity, there were those 'whose 'God was their belly, whose end was destruction, 'who minded earthly things,' Phil. iii. 18, 19. Some may take advantage at this acknowledgement, that there are such evils among such as are called professors. And, it must be confessed, that great scandal is given hereby unto the world, casting both them that give it, and them to whom it is given, under a most dreadful woe. But we must bear the reproach of it, as they did of old, and commit the issue of all things unto the watchful care of God. However it is good in such a season to be 'jealous over ourselves and others, 'to exhort one another daily whilst it is called to-'day, lest any be hardened thro' the deceitfulness 'of sin.' See Heb. xii. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. And because those with whom it is thus, cannot be spiritually-minded, yet are there some difficulties in the case, as unto the predominancy of a secret lust or sin, I shall consider it somewhat more distinctly.

1. We must distinguish between a time of temptation in some, and the ordinary state of mind and affections in others. There may be a season wherein God in his holy wise orderings of all things towards us, and for his own glory, in his holy blessed ends, may suffer a lust or corruption to break loose in the heart, to strive, tempt, suggest, and tumultuate, unto the great trouble and disquietude of the mind and conscience. Neither can it be denied, but that falling in conjunction with some vigorous temptation, it may proceed so far

far as to surprize the person in whom it is into actual sin, unto his defilement and amazement. In this case no man can say, 'He is tempted of 'God, for God tempteth no man,' but every man is 'tempted of his own lust and enticed.' But yet temptations of what sort soever they be, so far as they are afflictive, corrective, or penal, are ordered and disposed by God himself. For there is no evil of that nature, and he hath not done it. And where he will have the power of any corruption to be afflictive in any instance, two things may safely be ascribed unto him.

1. He with-holds the supplies of that grace whereby it might be effectually mortified and subdued. He can give in a sufficiency of efficacious grace, to repel any temptation, to subdue any, or all our lusts and sins. For he can, and doth work in us to will and to do, according to his pleasure. Ordinarily he doth so in them that believe; so that altho' their lusts may rebel and war, they cannot defile or prevail. But unto the continual supplies of this actual prevailing grace he is not obliged. When it may have a tendency unto his holy ends, he may and doth with-hold it. When it may be a proud soul is to be humbled, a careless soul to be awakened, an unthankful soul to be convinced and rebuked, a backsliding soul to be recovered, a froward, selfish, passionate soul to be broken and meekened, he can leave them for a season unto the sore exercise of a prevalent corruption, which, under his holy guidance, shall contribute greatly unto his blessed ends. It was so in the temptation of Paul, 2 Cor xi. 7, 8, 9.

If a man thro' disorder and excesses, is contracting many habitual distempers of body, which gradually and insensibly tend unto his death; it may be an advantage to be cast into a violent fever, which threatens immediately to take away his life. For he will hereby be thoroughly awakened unto the consideration of his danger, and not only labour to be freed from his fever, but also for the future to watch against those disorders and excesses which cast him into that condition. And sometimes a loose careless soul, that walks in a secure formal profession, contracts many spiritual diseases which tend unto death and ruin. No arguments or considerations can prevail with him, to awaken himself, to shake himself out of the dust, and to betake himself unto a more diligent and humble walking before God. In this state, it may be, thro' the permission of God, he is surprized into some open actual sin. Hereon, thro' the vigorous actings of an enlightened conscience, and the stirrings of any sparks of grace which yet remain, he is amazed, terrified, and stirs up himself to seek after deliverance.

2. God may, and doth, in his providence, administer objects and occasions of mens lusts for their trial. He will place them in such relations, in such circumstances, as shall be apt to provoke their affections, passions, desires and inclinations, unto those objects that are suited unto them.

In this state any lust will quickly get such power in the mind and affections, as to manage continual solicitations unto sin. It will not only dispose the affections towards it, but multiply thoughts

thoughts about it, and darken the mind as unto those considerations, which ought to prevail unto its mortification. In this condition it is hard to conceive how God should be in the thoughts of men in a due manner. However this state is very different from the habitual prevalency of any secret sin or corruption, in the ordinary course of mens walking in the world, and therefore I do not directly intend it.

If any one shall enquire how we may know this difference, namely, "That is between the occasional prevalency of any lust or corruption in conjunction with a temptation, and the power of sin in any instance habitually and constantly complied withal, or indulged in the mind?" I answer,

First, It is no great matter whether we are able to distinguish between them or no. For the end why God suffers any corruption to be such a snare and temptation, such a thorn and briar, is to awaken the souls of men out of their security, and to humble them for their pride and negligence. The more severe are their apprehensions concerning it, the more effectual it will be unto this end and purpose. It is good, it may be, that the soul should apprehend more of what is sinful in it, as it is a corruption, than of what is afflictive in it, as it is a temptation. For if it be conceived as a predominant lust, if there be any spark of grace remaining in the soul, it will not rest until, in some measure, it be subdued. It will also immediately put it upon a diligent search into itself,

self, which will issue in deep self-abasement, the principal end designed. But,

Secondly, For the relief of them that may be perplexed in their minds, about their state and condition, I say there is an apparent difference between these things. A lust or corruption arising up or breaking forth into a violent temptation, is the continual burthen, grief, and affliction of the soul wherein it is. And as the temptation, for the most part, which befalls such a person, will give him no rest from its reiterated sollicitations; so he will give the temptation no rest, but will be continually conflicting with it, and contending against it. It fills the soul with an amazement at itself, and continual self-abhorrency, that any such seeds of filth and folly should be yet remaining in it. With them in whom any sin is ordinarily prevalent, it is otherwise. According to their light and renewed occasional convictions, they have trouble about it, they cannot but have so, unless their consciences are utterly seared. But this trouble respects principally, if not solely, its guilt and effects. They know not what may ensue on their compliance with it, in this world and another. Beyond this they like it well enough, and are not willing to part with it. It is of this latter sort of persons of whom we speak at present.

2. We must distinguish between the perplexing sollicitation of any lust, and the conquering predominancy of it. The evil that is present with us, will be sollicitinng and pressing unto sin of its own accord, even where there is no such especial

temp-

temptation, as that ſpoken of before. So is the caſe ſtated, ſo are the nature and operations of it deſcribed, Rom. i. Gal. v. And ſometimes an eſpecial particular luſt, may be ſo warmed and fomented by mens conſtitutions within, or be ſo expoſed unto provoking, exciting occaſions without, as to bring perpetual trouble on the mind. Yet this may be, where no ſin hath the predominancy enquired after. And the difference between the perplexing ſollicitation of any corruption unto ſin, and the conquering prevalency of it, lies in this; that under the former, the thoughts, contrivances, and actings of the mind, are generally diſpoſed and inclined unto an oppoſition unto it, and a conflict with it, how it may be obviated, defeated, deſtroyed, how an abſolute victory may be obtained againſt it. Yea, death itſelf is ſweet unto ſuch perſons under this notion, as it is that which will deliver them from the perplexing power of their corruptions, ſo is the ſtate of ſuch a ſoul at large repreſented, Rom. vii. In the other caſe, namely, Of its predominacy, it diſpoſeth of the thoughts actually, for the moſt part, 'To make proviſion 'for the fleſh, and to fulfil it in the luſts thereof.' It fills the mind with pleaſing contemplations of its object, and puts it on contrivances for ſatisfaction. Yea, part of the bitterneſs of death unto ſuch perſons, is, that it will make an everlaſting ſeparation between them, and the ſatisfaction they have received in their luſts. It is bitter in the thoughts of it unto a worldly-minded man, becauſe it will take him from all his enjoyments, his wealth, profits and advantages. It is ſo unto

the sensual person, as that which finally determines all his pleasures.

Thirdly, There is a difference in the degrees of such a predominant corruption. In some it taints the affections, vitiates the thoughts, and works over the wills unto acts of a secret complacency in sin, but proceeds no farther. The whole mind may be vitiated by it, and rendred in the multitude of its thoughts, vain, sensual, or worldly, according as is the nature of the prevailing corruption. Yet here God puts bounds unto the raging of some mens corruptions, and says to their proud waves, Thus far shall ye proceed, and no farther. He either lays a restraint on their minds, that when lust hath fully conceived, it shall not bring forth sin, or he sets an hedge before them in his providence, that they shall not be able, in their circumstances, to find their way into what, perhaps, they do most earnestly desire. A woful life it is that such persons lead. They are continually tortured between their corruptions and convictions, or the love of sin, and fear of the event. With others it pursues its course into outward actual sins, which in some are discovered in this world, in others they are not. For some mens sins go before them into judgment, and some follow after. Some fall into sin upon surprizal, from a concurrence of temptation with corruption, and opportunities; some habituate themselves unto a course in sin, though in many it be be not discovered, in some it is. But among those who have received any spiritual light, and made profession of religion thereon, this seldom falls out, but

but from the great displeasure of God. For when men have long given way unto the prevalency of sin in their affections, inclinations and thoughts, and God hath set many an hedge before them to give bounds unto their inclinations, and to shut up the womb of sin; sometimes by afflictions, sometimes by fears and dangers, sometimes by the word; and yet the bent of their spirits is towards their sin; God takes off his hand of restraint, removes his hindrances, and gives them up unto their own hearts lusts, to do the things that are not convenient. All things hereon suits their desires, and they rush into actual sins and follies, setting their feet in the paths that go down to the chambers of death. The uncontrollable power of sin in such persons, and the greatness of God's displeasure against them, makes their condition most deplorable.

Those that are in this state, of either sort, the first or the latter, are remote from being spiritually-minded, nor is God in all their thoughts, as he ought to be. For,

1. They will not so think and meditate on God. Their delight is turned another way. Their affections which are the spring of their thoughts, which feed them continually, do cleave unto the things which are most adverse unto him. Love of sin is gotten to be the spring in them, and the whole stream of the thoughts which they choose and delight in, are towards the pleasures of it. If any thoughts of God come in, as a faint tide for a few minutes, and drive back the other stream, they are quickly repelled and carried away with the

the strong current of those which proceed from their powerful inclinations. Yet may such persons abide in the performance of outward holy duties, or attendance unto them. Pride of, or satisfaction in their gifts, may give them delight in their own performances, and something in those of others they may be exceedingly pleased withal; as it is expresly affirmed, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. But in these things they have no immediate real thoughts of God, none that they delight in, none that they seek to stir up in themselves, and those which impose themselves on them they reject.

2. As they will not, so they dare not think of God. They will not, because of the power of their lusts; they dare not, because of their guilt. No sooner should they begin to think of him in good earnest, but their sin would lose all its desirable forms and appearances, and represent itself in the horror of guilt alone. And, in that condition, all the properties of the divine nature are suited to encrease the dread and terror of the sinner. Adam had heard God's voice before with delight and satisfaction: But on the hearing of the same voice after he had sinned, he hid himself, and cried that he was afraid. There is a way for men to think of God with the guilt of sin upon them, which they intend to forsake; but none for any to do it with the guilt of sin, which they resolve to continue in. Wherefore, of all these sorts of persons it may be said, that God is not in all their thoughts, and therefore are they far enough from being spiritually-minded. For, unless

less we have many thoughts of God, we cannot be so. Yea, moreover there are two things required unto those thoughts which we have of God, that there may be an evidence of our being so.

First, That we take delight in them, Psal. xxx. 4. 'Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, 'and give thanks at the remembrance of his holi-'ness.' The remembrance of God, delighteth and refresheth the hearts of his saints, and stirs them up unto thankfulness.

1. They rejoice in what God is in himself. Whatever is good, amiable or desirable; whatever is holy, just and powerful; whatever is gracious, wise and merciful, and all that is so, they see and apprehend in God. That God is what he is, is the matter of their chiefest joy. Whatever befalls them in this world, whatever troubles and disquietment they are exercised withal, the remembrance of God is a satisfactory refreshment unto them. For therein they behold all that is good and excellent, the infinite center of all perfections. Wicked men would have God to be any thing but what he is. Nothing that God is really and truly pleaseth them. Wherefore they either frame false notions of him in their minds, as Psalm l. 21. Or they think not of him at all, at least as they ought, unless sometimes they tremble at his anger and power. Some benefit they suppose may be had, by what he can do, but how there can be any delight in what he is, they know not. Yea, all their trouble ariseth from hence, that he is what he is. It would be a relief unto

them,

them, if they could make any [illegible]
power, his holineſs, his righteouſneſs, [illegible]
preſence: But his ſaints, as the Pſalmiſt [illegible]
'Give thanks at the remembrance of his holi-
'neſs.'

And when we can delight in the thoughts of what God is in himſelf; of his infinite excellencies and perfections, it gives us a threefold evidence of our being ſpiritually-minded.

(1.) In that it is ſuch an evidence that we have a gracious intereſt in thoſe excellencies and perfections, whereon we can ſay with rejoicing in ourſelves, this God, thus holy, thus powerful, thus juſt, good and gracious, 'is our God, and 'he will be our guide unto death.' So the Pſalmiſt under the conſideration of his own frailty and apprehenſions of death in the midſt of his years, comforts and refreſheth himſelf with thoughts of God's eternity and immutability, with his intereſt in them, Pſalm cii. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. And God himſelf propoſeth unto us, his infinite immutability, as the ground whereon we may expect ſafety and deliverance, Mal. iii. 6. When we can thus think of God, and what he is, with delight, it is, I ſay, an evidence that we have a gracious covenant intereſt, even in what God is in himſelf; which none have but thoſe who are ſpiritually-minded

(2.) It is an evidence that the image of God is begun to be wrought in our own ſouls; and we approve of, and rejoice in it, more than in all other things whatever. Whatever notions men may have of the divine goodneſs, holineſs, righteouſneſs

[illegible] purity, they are all but barren, jejune and fruitleſs, unleſs there be a ſimilitude and conformity unto them, wrought in their minds and ſouls. Without this, they cannot rejoice in the thoughts and remembrance of the divine excellencies. Wherefore, when we can do ſo, when ſuch meditations of God are ſweet unto us, it is an evidence that we have ſome experience in ourſelves of the excellency of the image of thoſe perfections, and that we rejoice in them above all things in this world.

(3.) They are ſo alſo, in that they are manifeſt, that we do diſcern and judge that our eternal bleſſedneſs doth conſiſt in the full manifeſtation, and our enjoyment of God in what he is, and of all his divine excellencies. This men for the moſt part, take for granted, but how it ſhould be ſo, they know not. They underſtand it, in ſome meaſure, whoſe hearts are here deeply affected with delight in them; they are able to believe that the manifeſtation and enjoyment of the divine excellencies, will give eternal reſt, ſatisfaction, and complacency unto their ſouls. No wicked man can look upon it otherwiſe than a torment, to abide for ever with eternal holineſs, Iſa. xxxiii. 14. And we ourſelves can have no preſent proſpect into the fulneſs of future glory, when God ſhall be all in all, but through the delight and ſatisfaction which we have here, in the contemplation of what God is in himſelf, as the center of all divine perfections.

I would therefore preſs this unknown, this neglected duty on the minds of thoſe of us in an e-

N ſpecial

special manner, who are visibly drawing nigh un-
to eternity. The days are coming, wherein what
God is in himself, that is, as manifest and exerted
in Christ, shall alone be (as we hope) the eternal
blessedness and reward of our souls. Is it pos-
sible that any thing should be more necessary for
us, more useful unto us, than to be exercised in
such thoughts and contemplations. The benefits
we may have hereby are not to be reckoned, some
of them only may be named. As (1.) We shall
have the best trial of ourselves, how our hearts
really stand affected towards God. For if, upon
examination, we find ourselves not really to de-
light and rejoice in God, for what he is in himself,
and that all perfections are eternally resident in
him, how dwelleth the love of God in us? But
if we can truly rejoice at the remembrance of
his holiness, in the thoughts of what he is, our
hearts are upright with him. (2.) This is that
which will effectually take off our thoughts and
affections from things here below. One spiritual
view of the divine goodness, beauty and holiness,
will have more efficacy to raise the heart unto a
contempt of all earthly things, than any other e-
vidence whatever. (3.) It will encrease the
grace of being heavenly-minded in us, on the
grounds before declared. (4.) It is the best, I
had almost said, it is the only preparation for the
future, full enjoyment of God. This will gra-
dually lead us into his presence, take away all
fears of death, increase our longing after eternal
rest, and ever make us groan to be uncloathed.
Let us not than cease labouring with our hearts,
until

until thro' grace, we have a spiritually sensible delight and joy in the remembrances and thoughts of what God is in himself.

2. In thoughts of God, his saints rejoice at the remembrance of what he is, and what he will be unto them. Herein have they regard unto all the holy relations that he hath taken on himself towards them, with all the effects of his covenant in Christ Jesus. To that purpose were some of the last words of David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 'Altho' 'my house be not so with God, yet he hath made 'with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all 'things and sure, this is all my salvation and all my 'desire.' In the prospect he had of all the distresses that were to befal his family, he triumphantly rejoiceth in the everlasting covenant that God had made with him. In these thoughts his saints take delight, they are sweet unto them, and full of refreshment. 'Their meditations of him are 'sweet, and they are glad in the Lord,' Psal. civ. 34. Thus is it with them that are truly spiritually-minded. They not only think much of God, but they take delight in these thoughts, they are sweet unto them; and not only so, but they have no solid joy nor delight, but in their thoughts of God, which therefore they retreat unto continually. They do so, especially on great occasions, which of themselves are apt to divert them from them. As, Suppose a man hath received a signal mercy, with the matter whereof he is exceedingly affected and delighted. The minds of some men are apt on such occasions to be filled with thoughts of what they have received, and their affections

to be wholly taken up with it; but he who is spiritually-minded, will immediately retreat unto thoughts of God, placing his delight and taking up his satisfaction in him. And so, on the other side, great distresses, prevalent sorrows, strong pains, violent distempers, are apt of themselves to take up and exercise all the thoughts of men about them. But those who are spiritually-minded, will, in and under them all, continually betake themselves unto thoughts of God, wherein they find relief and refreshment against all that they feel or fear. In every state, their principal joy is in the remembrance of his holiness.

Secondly, That they be accompanied with godly fear and reverence. These are required of us, in all wherein we have to do with God, Heb. xii. 28, 29. And as the scripture doth not more abound with precepts unto any duty, so the nature of God and our own, with the infinite distance between them, make it indispensably necessary even in the light of the natural conscience. Infinite greatness, infinite holiness, infinite power, all which God is, command the uttermost reverential fear that our natures are capable of. The want hereof, is the spring of innumerable evils, yea, indeed of all that is so. Hence are blasphemous abuses of the holy name of God in cursed oaths and execrations; hence it is taken in vain, in ordinary exclamations; hence is all formality in religion.

It is the spiritual mind alone that can reconcile those things which are prescribed us as our duty towards God. To delight and rejoice in him always,

ways, to triumph in the remembrance of him, to draw nigh unto him with boldness and confidence, are, on the one hand, prescribed unto us: And, on the other, it is so, that we fear and tremble before him, that 'we fear that great and dreadful 'name the Lord our God,' that we have grace to serve him with reverence and godly fear, because he is a consuming fire. These things carnal reason can comprehend no consistency in; what it is afraid of, it cannot delight in; and what it delights in, it will not long fear. But the consideration of faith (concerning what God is in himself, and what he will be unto us,) gives these different graces their distinct operations, and a blessed reconciliation in our souls. Wherefore, all our thoughts of God ought to be accompanied with an holy awe and reverence, from a due sense of his greatness, holiness and power. Two things will utterly vitiate all thoughts of God, and render them useless unto us.

(1.) Vain curiosity. (2.) Carnal boldness. It is inimaginable how the subtle disquisitions and disputes of men, about the nature, properties, and councils of God, have been corrupted, rendred sapless and useless by vain curiosity, and striving for an artificial accuracy in the expression of mens apprehensions. When the wits and minds of men are engaged in such thoughts, God is not in all their thoughts, even when all their thoughts are concerning him. When once men are got into their metaphysical curiosities, and logical niceties, in their contemplations about God, and his divine properties, they bid farewel, for the most

part, unto all godly fear and reverence. Others are under the power of carnal boldneſs, that they think of God, with no other reſpect, than if they thought of worms of the earth like themſelves. There is no holy awfulneſs upon their minds and ſouls in the mention of his name. By theſe things may our thoughts of God be ſo vitiated, that the heart ſhall not in them be affected with a reverence of him, nor any evidence be given, that we are ſpiritually-minded.

It is this holy reverence that is the means of bringing in ſanctifying virtue into our ſouls, from God, upon our thoughts of him. None that think of God with a due reverence, but he ſhall be ſenſible of advantage by it. Hereby do we ſanctify God in our acceſs unto him, and when we do ſo, he will ſanctify and purify our hearts by thoſe very thoughts in which we draw nigh to him.

We may have many ſudden, occaſional, tranſient thoughts of God, that are not introduced into our minds by a preceding reverential fear. But if they leave not that fear on our hearts, in proportion unto their continuance with us, they are of no value, but will inſenſibly habituate us unto a common bold frame of ſpirit, which he deſpiſes.

So is it in the caſe of thoughts of a contrary nature. Thoughts of ſin, of ſinful objects, may ariſe in our minds from the remainders of corruption; or be occaſioned by the temptations and ſuggeſtions of Satan: If theſe are immediately rejected, and caſt out of us, the ſoul is not more prejudiced by their entrance, than it is advantaged

ed by their rejection thro' the power of grace. But if they make frequent returns into the minds of men, or make any abode or continuance in their soliciting of the affections, they greatly defile the mind and conscience, disposing the person unto the further entertainment of them. So if our occasional thoughts of God, do immediately leave us, and pass away without much affecting our minds; we shall have little or no benefit by them. But if, by their frequent visits, and some continuance with us, they dispose souls unto an holy reverence of God; they are a blessed means of promoting our sanctification. Without this, I say, there may be thoughts of God unto no advantage of the soul.

There is implanted on our nature such a sense of a divine power and presence, as that, on all sudden occasions and surprizals, it will act itself according unto that sense and apprehension. There is *Vox naturae clamantis ad Dominum naturae:* A voice in nature itself, upon any thing that is suddenly too hard for it, which cries out immediately unto the God of nature. So men, on such occasions, without any consideration, are surprized into a calling on the name of God, and crying unto him. And from the same natural apprehension it is, that wicked and profane persons, will break forth on all occasions into cursed swearing by his name. So men in such ways have thoughts of God, without either reverence or godly fear, without giving any glory unto him, and, for the most part, unto their own disadvan-

tage. Such are all thoughts of God that are not accompanied with holy fear and reverence.

There is ſcarce any duty that ought at preſent to be more preſs'd on the conſciences of men, than this of keeping up a conſtant holy reverence of God in all wherein they have to do with him, both in private and public, in their inward thoughts, and outward communication. Formality hath ſo prevailed on religion, and that under the moſt effectual means of its ſuppreſſion, that very many do manifeſt, that they have little or no reverence of God, in the moſt ſolemn duties of his worſhip; and leſs it may be in their ſecret thoughts. Some ways that have been found out to keep up a pretence and appearance of it, have been and are deſtructive unto it.

But herein conſiſts the very life of all religion. The fear of God is, in the Old Teſtament, the uſual expreſſion of all the due reſpect of our ſouls unto him; and that becauſe where it is not in exerciſe, nothing is accepted with him. And thence the whole of our wiſdom is ſaid to conſiſt therein, and if it be not in a prevalent exerciſe in all wherein we have to do with him immediately, all our duties are utterly loſt as to the ends of his glory, and the ſpiritual advantage of our own ſouls.

## CHAP. IX.

*What of God, or in God, we are to think and meditate upon. His Being; Reasons of it; Oppositions to it; The way of their Conquest. Thoughts of the Omnipresence, and Omniscience of God, peculiarly necessary. The Reasons hereof. As also of his Omnipotency. The Use and Benefit of such Thoughts.*

THese things mentioned have been premised in general, as unto the nature, manner, and way of exercise of our thoughts on God. That which remains, is, To give some particular instances, of what we are to think upon in an especial manner; and what we will be conversant withal in our thoughts, if so be we are spiritually-minded. And I shall not insist at present on the things which concern his grace and love in Christ Jesus, which belong unto another head, but on those which have an immediate respect unto the divine nature itself, and its holy essential properties.

First, Think much of the being and existence of God. Herein lies the foundation of all our relation and access unto him. Heb. xi. 6. 'He that 'cometh unto God, must believe that he is.' This is the first object of faith, and it is the first act of reason; and being the sole foundation of all

all religion, it is our duty to be exercised unto multiplied thoughts about it, renewed on all occasions. For many who are not direct Atheists, yet live without any solid well-grounded assent unto the divine Being; they do not so believe it as to be practically influenced with the consideration of it. It is granted, that the inbred light of nature, in the due exercise of reason, will give any rational creature satisfaction in the being of God. But there is in the most an anticipation of any thoughts of this nature by tradition and education, which hath invited men into an assent unto it, they know not how. They never call'd it into question, nor have as they suppose any cause so to do. Nature itself startles at the first thoughts of denying of it, but if ever such persons, on any urgent occasions, come to have real thoughts about it, they are at a loss, and fluctuate in their minds, as not having any certain indubitable conviction of its truth. Wherefore, as our knowledge of the divine Being is, as to the foundation of it, laid in the light of nature, the operation of conscience, and the due exercise of reason about the works and effects of infinite power and wisdom; so it ought to be encreased, and rendred useful by faith in divine revelations, and the experience of divine power thro' them. By this faith we ought to let in frequent thoughts of the divine Being and existence. And that on two reasons rendring the duty necessary in an eminent manner, in this age wherein we live.

1. The abounding of Atheism both notional and practical. The reasons of it, have been given

ven before, and the matter of fact is evident unto any ordinary observation. And on two accounts with respect hereunto we ought to abound in thoughts of faith concerning the being of God. (1.) An especial testimony is required in us, in opposition to this cursed effect of hell. He therefore who is spiritually-minded, cannot but have many thoughts of the being of God, thereby giving glory to him. *Isa.* xliii. 9, 10, 11, 12. 'Let 'all the nations be gathered together, and let 'the people be assembled: Who among them can 'declare this, and shew us former things? Let 'them bring forth their witnesses, that they may 'be justified: Or let them hear and say, It is 'truth. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and 'my servant whom I have chosen: That ye may 'know and believe me, and understand that I am 'he: Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be any after me. I, even I am 'the Lord, and beside me there is no Saviour. I 'have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange God among you: 'Therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, 'that I am God.' Chap. xliv. 8. 'Fear ye not, 'neither be afraid: Have not I told thee from 'that time, and have declared it; ye are even my 'witnesses. Is there a God besides me? Yea, 'there is no God: I know not any.' (2.) We shall have occasion of them continually administred unto us. Those Atheistical impieties, principles and practices which abound amongst us, are grievous provocations unto all pious souls. Without frequent retreat unto thoughts of the being

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of God, there is no relief nor refreshment to be had under them. Such was the case of Noah in the old world, and of Lot in Sodom, which rendred their graces illustrious.

2. Because of the unaccountable confusions that all things are fill'd withal at this day in the world. Whatever in former times, hath been a temptation in human affairs unto any of the people of God, it abounds at this day. Never had men, profane and profligate, greater outward appearances to strengthen them in their Atheism; nor those that are godly, greater trials for their faith, with respect unto the visible state of things in the world. The Psalmist of old, on such an occasion, was almost surprized into unbelieving complaints, Psal. lxxiii. 2, 3, 4, &c. And such surprizals may now befal us, that we may be ready to say with him; 'Verily I have cleansed my 'heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocen-'cy, for all the day long have I been plagued 'and chastened every morning.' Hence when the prophet Habakkuk was exercised with thoughts about such a state of things as is at this day in the world, which he declares, Chap. i. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. he lays the foundation of his consideration in the fresh exercise of faith on the being and properties of God, v. 12, 13. And David makes that his retreat on the like occasion, Psal. xi. 3, 4, 5.

In such a season as this is, upon both the accounts mentioned, those who are spiritually-minded will much exercise their thoughts about the being and existence of God. They will say with-

in themselves, 'Verily there is a reward for the 'righteous, verily he is a God who judgeth in 'the earth.' Hence will follow such apprehensions of the immensity of his nature, of his eternal power and infinite wisdom, of his absolute sovereignty, as will hold their souls firm and stedfast, in the highest storms of temptation that may befal them.

Yet are there two things that the weaker sort of believers may be exercised with, in their thoughts of the divine Being and existence, which may occasion them some trouble.

(1.) Satan knowing the weakness of our minds in the immediate contemplation of things infinite and incomprehensible, will sometimes take advantage to insinuate blasphemous imaginations in opposition unto what we would fix upon, and relieve ourselves withal. He will take that very time, trusting unto our weakness, and his own methods of subtilty, to suggest his temptations unto Atheism, by insnaring inquiries, when we go about to refresh our souls with thoughts of the divine Being and excellencies. "But is there a God indeed? How "do you know that there is a God? and may it "not be otherwise?" will be his language unto our minds. For, from his first temptation by way of an ensnaring question, 'Yea, and hath God 'said it, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the gar-'den?' he proceeds still much in the same methods. So he did with our Saviour himself, 'If 'thou be the Son of God:' Is there a God? How if there should be none? In such a case the rule is given us by the apostle; 'Above all 'take

'take the shield of faith, whereby ye shall be 'able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked,' Eph. vi. 16. τῦ πονηρῦ of the wicked one, that is the devil. And two ways will faith act itself on this occasion.

1. By a speedy rejection of such diabolical suggestions with detestation. So did our Saviour in a case not unlike it; 'Get thee behind me Sa'tan.' Wherefore, if any such thoughts are suggested, or seem to arise in your minds, know assuredly that they are no less immediately from the devil, than if he personally stood before you, and visibly appeared unto you; if he did so, there is none of you but would arm your selves with an utter defiance of what he should offer unto you. It is no less necessary on this occasion, when you may feel him, tho' you see him not. Suffer not his fiery darts to abide one moment with you, entertain no parly or dispute about them, reject them with indignation, and strengthen your rejection of them with some pertinent testimony of Scripture, as our Saviour did. If a man have a granado or fire-ball cast into his cloaths by his enemy, he doth not consider whether it will burn or no, but immediately shakes it off from him. Deal no otherwise with these fiery darts, lest by their abode with you they inflame your imagination unto greater disturbance.

2. In case they utterly depart not, upon this endeavour for their exclusion and casting out, return immediately, without further dispute, unto your own experience. When the devil hath asked you the question, if you answer him, you will be

be ensnared; but if thereon you ask yourselves the question, and apply yourselves unto your own experience for an answer unto it, you will frustrate all his designs.

There are arguments to be taken, as was said, from the light of nature, and reason in its proper exercise, sufficient to defeat all objections of that kind. But these are not our proper weapons in case of our own temptation, which alone is now under consideration. It requires longer and more sedate reasonings than such a state will admit of, nor is it a sanctified medium for our relief.

It is what is suited unto suggestions on the occasion of our meditations that we enquire after. In them we are not to argue on such principles, but to take the shield of faith to quench these fiery darts. And if on such occasions Satan can divert us into long disputes about the being of God, he hath his end, by carrying us off from the meditation on him which we did design, and after a while he will prevail to make it a common road and trade, that no sooner shall we begin to think of God, but immediately we must dispute about his being.

Therefore the way in this case for him who is really a believer, is to retreat immediately unto his own experience, which will pour shame and contempt on the suggestions of Satan. There is no believer, who hath knowledge and time to exercise the wisdom of faith in the consideration of himself, and of God's dealings with him, but hath a witness in himself of his eternal power and Godhead, as also, of all those other perfections

of his nature, which he is pleased to manifest and glorify by Jesus Christ. Wherefore, on this suggestion of Satan, that there is no God, he will be able to say, that he might better tell me that I do not live nor breathe, that I am not fed by my meat, nor warmed by my cloaths, that I know not myself nor any thing else: For I have spiritual sense and experience of the contrary; like him of old, who when a cunning Sophister would prove unto him by Syllogisms, that there was no such thing as motion, he gave no answer unto his arguments, but rose up and walked. How often, will he say, have I had experience of the power and presence of God in prayer; as tho' I had not only heard of him by the hearing of the ear, but also seen him by the seeing of the eye? How often hath he put forth his power and grace in me, by his Spirit and his word, with an uncontrollable evidence of his being, goodness, love and grace? How often hath he refreshed my conscience with the sense of the pardon of sin, speaking that peace unto my soul, which all the world could not communicate unto me? In how many afflictions, dangers, troubles, hath he been a present help and relief? What sensible emanations of life and power from him, have I obtained, in meditation on his grace and glory? As he who had been blind answered the Pharisees unto their ensnaring captious questions; be it what it will, 'One thing I know, that whereas 'I was blind now I see.' Whatever, saith such a soul, be in this temptation of Satan, one thing I know full well, that 'whereas I was dead, I

'am

'am alive,' whereas 'I was blind, now I see:' and that by an effect of divine power.'

This shield of faith managed in the hand of experience, will quench the fiery darts of Satan; and he will fall under a double defeat. (1.) His temptations will be repell'd by the proper way of resistance, whereon he will not only desist in his attempt, but even fly from you. 'Resist the devil,' saith the apostle, 'and he will fly from you.' He will not only depart and cease to trouble you, but will depart as one defeated and confounded. And it is for want of this resistance, lively made use of, that many hang so long in the briars of this temptation. (2.) Recalling the experiences we have had of God, will lead us unto the exercise of all kind of graces, which is the greatest disappointment of our adversary.

(2.) In thoughts of the divine Being and existence, we are apt to be at a loss, to be as it were overwhelmed in our minds, because the object is too great and glorious for us to contemplate on. Eternity and immensity, every thing under the notion of infinite, take off the mind from its distinct actings, and reduce it as it were into nothing. Hereon in some, not able to abide in the strict reasons of things, vain and foolish imaginations are apt to arise, and enquiries how can these things be, which we cannot comprehend? Others are utterly at a loss, and turn away their thoughts from them, as they would do their eyes from the bright beams of the sun. Two things are adviseable in this case.

1. That we betake ourselves unto an holy admiration

miration of what we cannot comprehend. In these things we cannot see God and live; nay, in life eternal itself, they are not absolutely to be comprehended, only what is infinite can fully comprehend what is so. Here they are the objects of faith and worship, in them we may find rest and satisfaction, when enquiries and reasonings will disquiet us, and it may be overwhelm us. Infinite glory forbids us any near approach but only by faith. The soul thereby bowing down itself unto God's adorable greatness, and incomprehensible perfections, finding ourselves to be nothing, and God to be all, will give us rest and peace in these things, Rom. xi. 33, 34, 35, 36. We have but unsteady thoughts, of the greatness of the world, and all the nations and inhabitants of it, yet are both it and these, but as 'the dust of the ballance, and the drop of the 'bucket, as vanity, as nothing,' compared with God: What then can our thoughts concerning him issue in him, but holy admiration?

2. In case we are brought unto a loss and disorder in our minds, on the contemplation of any one infinite property of God, it is good to divert our thoughts unto the effects of it, such as whereof we have, or may have experience; for what is too great or high for us in itself, is made suitable to our understandings in its effects. So 'the 'invisible things of God, are known in and by 'the things that are seen.' And there is indeed no property of the divine nature, but we may have an experience of it, as unto some of its effects, in and upon ourselves. These we may con-

fider, and, in the streams taste of the fountain, which we cannot approach. By them we may be led unto an holy admiration of what is in itself infinite, immense, incomprehensible. I cannot comprehend the immensity of God's nature, it may be I cannot understand the nature of immensity; yet, if I find by experience, and do strongly believe, that he is always present wherever I am, I have the faith of it, and satisfaction in it.

Secondly, With thoughts of the divine Being, those of his Omnipresence and Omniscience ought continually to accompany us. We cannot take one step in a walk before him, unless we remember, that always, and in all places, he is present with us; that the frame of our hearts, and our inward thoughts, are continually in his view, no less than our outward actions. And, as we ought to be perpetually under an awe of, and in the fear of God in these apprehensions, so there are some seasons wherein our minds ought to be in the actual conception and thoughts of them, without which we shall not be preserved in our duty.

1. The first season of this nature, is when times, places, with other occasions of temptation, and consequently of sinning, do come and meet. With some, company doth constitute such a season; and with some, secrecy with opportunity do the same. There are those who are ready, with a careless boldness, to put themselves on such societies as they do know have been temptations unto them, and occasions of sin; every such entrance into any society or company, unto them who know

know how it hath formerly ſucceeded, is their actual ſin, and it is juſt with God to leave them to all the evil conſequents that do enſue. Others alſo, do either chooſe, or are frequently caſt on ſuch ſocieties; and no ſooner are they engag'd in them, but they forget all regard unto God, and give themſelves up not only unto vanity, but unto various ſorts of exceſs. David knew the evil and danger of ſuch occaſions; gives us an account of his behaviour in them, Pſalm xxxix. 1, 2, 3. 'I ſaid, I will take heed to my ways, that I ſin 'not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth 'with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. I 'was dumb with ſilence, I held my peace, even 'from good, and my ſorrow was ſtirred: My 'heart was hot within me, while I was muſing, 'the fire burned: Then ſpake I with my tongue.' As for their evil words and ways he would have no communication with them. And as unto good diſcourſe, he judgeth it unſeaſonable, to caſt pearl before ſwine. He was therefore ſilent as unto, that alſo, tho' it was a grief and trouble unto him. But this occaſioned in him afterwards thoſe excellent meditations which he expreſſed in the following verſes. In the entrances of theſe occaſions, if men would remember the preſence of God with them, in theſe places, with the holy ſeverity of the eye that is upon them, it would put an awe upon their ſpirits, and embitter thoſe jollities, whoſe reliſh is given them by temptation and ſin. He doth neither walk humbly nor circumſpectly, who being unneceſſarily caſt on the ſociety of men wicked or profane, (on ſuch occaſions, wherein

in the ordinary sort of men give more than ordinary liberty unto corrupt communication, or excess in any kind,) doth not in his entrance of them, call to mind the presence and all-seeing eye of God; and, at his departure from them, consider whether his deportment hath been such as became that presence, and his being under that eye. But alas! Pretences of business and necessary occasions, ingagements of trade, carnal relations, and the common course of communication in the world, with a supposition that all sorts of society are allowed for diversion, have cast out the remembrance of God from the minds of most, even then when men cannot be preserved from sin without it.

This hath sullied the beauty of gospel-conversation amongst the most, and left in very few any prevalent evidence of being spiritually-minded.

Wherefore, as unto them who either by their voluntary choice or necessity of their occasions, do enter and engage promiscuously into all societies and companies, let them know assuredly, that if they awe not their hearts and spirits continually with the thoughts and apprehensions of the Omnipresence and Omniscience of God, that he is always with them, and his eye always upon them, they will not be preserved from snares and sinful miscarriages.

Yea, such thoughts are needful unto the best of us all, and in the best of our societies, that we behave not ourselves undecently in them at any time.

Again, Unto some, privacy, secresy, and opportunity, are occasions of temptation and sin.

They are ſo unto perſons under convictions, not wholly turned to God. Many a good beginning hath been utterly ruined by this occaſion and temptation. Privacy and opportunity have overthrown many ſuch perſons in the beſt of their reſolutions. And they are ſo unto all perſons not yet flagitiouſly wicked. Curſed fruits proceed every day from theſe occaſions. We need no other demonſtration of their power and efficacy in tempting unto ſin, but the viſible effects of them. And what they are unto any, they muſt be unto all, if not diligently watched againſt. So the apoſtle reflects on the ſhameful things that are done in the dark, in a concurrence of ſecreſy and opportunity. This therefore gives a juſt ſeaſon unto thoughts of the Omnipreſence and Omniſcience of God, and they will not be wanting in ſome meaſure in them that are ſpiritually-minded.

'God is in this place, the darkneſs is no darkneſs unto him, light and darkneſs are with him both alike,' are ſufficient conſiderations to lay in the ballance againſt any temptation ſpringing out of ſecreſy and opportunity. One thought of the actual preſence of the holy God, and the open view of his all-ſeeing eye, will do more to cool thoſe affections which luſt may put into a tumult on ſuch occaſions, than any other conſiderations whatever. A ſpeedy retreat hereunto, upon the firſt perplexing thought wherewith temptation aſſaults the ſoul, will be its ſtrong tower, where it ſhall be ſafe.

2. A ſecond ſeaſon calling for the exerciſe of

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our minds in thoughts of the Omnipresence and Omniscience of God, is made up of our solitudes and retirements. These give us the most genuine trials whether we are spiritually-minded or no. What we are in them, that we are and no more. But yet in some of them, as in walking and journeyings, or the like, vain thoughts and foolish imaginations are exceeding apt to sollicite our minds. Whatever is stored up in the affections or memory, will at such a time offer itself for our present entertainment: And where men have accustomed themselves unto any sort of things, they will press on them for the possession of their thoughts, as it were, whether they will or no. The Psalmist gives us the way to prevent this evil; Psal. xvi. 7, 8. 'I will bless the Lord 'who hath given me counsel, my reins also instruct 'me in the night season. I have set the Lord 'always before me, because he is at my right 'hand.' His reins, that is, his affections, and secret thoughts, gave him counsel and instructed him in all such seasons; but whence had they that wisdom and faithfulness: In themselves they are the seat of all lusts and corruptions, nor could do any thing but seduce him into an evil frame. It was from hence alone 'that he set the Lord al'ways before him.' Continual apprehensions of the presence of God with him, kept his mind, his heart and affections, in that awe and reverence of him, as that they always instructed him unto his duty. But, as I remember, I spake somewhat as unto the due management of our thoughts in this season before.

3. Times of great difficulties, dangers, and perplexities of mind thereon, are a ſeaſon calling for the ſame duty. Suppoſe a man is left alone in his trials for the profeſſion of the goſpel, as it was with Paul, when 'all men forſook him, and 'no man ſtood by him.' Suppoſe him to be brought before princes, rulers, judges, that are fill'd with rage, and armed with power againſt him, all things being diſpoſed to affect him with dread and terror. It is the duty of ſuch a one to call off his thoughts from all things viſibly preſent, and to fix them on the Omnipreſence and Omniſcience of God. He ſits amongſt thoſe judges, tho' they do not acknowledge him; he rules over them at his pleaſure; he knows the cauſe of the oppreſſed, and juſtifies them whenever the world condemns; and can deliver them when he pleaſeth. With the thoughts hereof did thoſe holy ſouls ſupport themſelves when they ſtood before the fiery countenance of the bloody tyrant on the one hand, and the burning fiery furnace on the other, Dan. iii. 14. 'Our God whom we 'ſerve is able to deliver us from the burning fie'ry furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine 'hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, 'O king, that we will not ſerve thy Gods, nor 'worſhip the golden image which thou haſt ſet 'up.' Thoughts of the preſence and power of God, gave them not only comfort and ſupportment under their diſtreſs, when they were alone and helpleſs, but courage and reſolution to defy the tyrant to his face. And when the apoſtle was brought before Nero, that monſter of cruelty and villany

villany, and all men forsook him, he affirms, 'That the Lord stood by him, and strengthened 'him,' 2 Tim. iv. 17. He refreshed himself with thoughts of his presence, and had the blessed fruit of it.

Wherefore, on such occasions, when the hearts of men are ready to quake, when they see all things about them fill'd with dread and terror, and all help far away, it is I say, their duty and wisdom to abstract and take off their thoughts from all outward and present appearances, and to fix them on the presence of God. This will greatly change the scene of things in their minds; and they will find that strength, and power, and wisdom, are on their side alone; all that appears against them, being but vanity, folly, and weakness.

So when the servant of Elisha saw the place where they were, compassed with an host, both horses and chariots that came to take them, he cried out for fear, 'Alas my master how shall we 'do?' But upon the prayer of the prophet, the Lord opening the eyes of the young man, to see the heavenly guard that he had sent unto him, the mountain being full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha, his fear and trouble departed, 2 Kings vi. 15, 16, 19. And when in the like extremity God opens the eyes of faith to behold his glorious presence, we shall no more be afraid of the dread of men. Herein did the holy martyrs triumph of old, and even despised their bloody persecutors. Our Saviour himself made it the ground of his supportment on the like occasion,

John

John xvi. 32. 'Behold,' saith he to his disciples, his only friends, 'the hour cometh, yea, is now 'come, that ye shall be scattered every one to 'his own, and leave me alone, and yet I am not 'alone, because the Father is with me.' Can we but possess our souls with the apprehension, that when we are left alone in our trials and dangers, from any countenance of friends, or help of men, yet that indeed we are 'not alone, because the 'Father is with us,' it will support us under our despondencies, and enable us unto our duties.

4. Especial providential warnings call for thoughts of God's Omnipresence and Omniscience. So Jacob in his nightly vision, instantly made this conclusion; 'God is in this place, and 'I knew it not.' We have frequently such warnings given unto us. Sometimes we have so in the things which are esteemed accidental, whence it may be we are strangely delivered. Sometimes we have so in the things which we see to befall others, by thunder, lightning, storms at sea or land. For all the works of God, especially those that are rare and strange, have a voice whereby he speaks unto us. The first thing suggested unto a spiritual mind in such seasons, will be, 'God 'is in this place,' he is present that liveth and seeth, as Hagar confessed on the like occasion, Gen. xvi. 13, 14.

Thirdly, Have frequent thoughts of God's Omnipotency, or his almighty power. This most men it may be, suppose they need not much exhortation unto; for none ever doubted of it; who doth not grant it on all occasions? Men grant it in-

indeed in general; for eternal power is inseparable from the first notion of the divine Being. So are they conjoined by the apostle, 'His eternal power and Godhead,' Rom. i. 20. Yet few believe it for themselves as they ought. Indeed, to believe the almighty power of God, with reference unto ourselves, and all our concernments, temporal and eternal, is one of the highest and most noble acts of faith, which includes all others in it. For this is that which God at first proposed alone as the proper object of our faith, in our entrance into covenant with him, Gen. xvii. 1. 'I am God Almighty:' That which Job arrived unto after his long exercise and trial; 'I know,' saith he, 'thou canst do every thing, and no thought of thine can be hindred,' chap. xlii. 2. 'God hath spoken once' (saith the Psalmist) 'twice have I heard this, that power belongs unto God,' Psal. lxii. 11. It was that which God saw it necessary frequently to instruct him in. For we are ready to be affected with the appearances of present power in creatures, and to suppose that all things will go according unto their wills, because of their power. But it is quite otherwise; all creatures are poor feeble ciphers that can do nothing: Power belongs unto God, it is a flower of his crown imperial, which he will suffer none to usurp; if the proudest of them go beyond the bounds and limits of his present permission, he will send worms to eat them up, as he did to Herod.

It is utterly impossible we should walk before God, unto his glory, or with any real peace, com-

comfort or satisfaction in our own souls, unless our minds are continually exercised with thoughts of his almighty power. Every thing that befals us, every thing that we hear of, which hath the least of danger in it, will discompose our minds, and either make us tremble like the leaves of the forest that are shaken with the wind, or betake ourselves to foolish or sinful relief, unless we are firmly established in the faith hereof. Consider the promises of God unto the church which are upon record, and as yet unaccomplished; consider the present state of the church in the world, with all that belongs unto it; in all the fears and dangers they are exposed unto, in all the evils they are exercised withal, and we shall quickly find, that unless this sheat-anchor be well fixed, we shall be tossed up and down at all uncertainties, and exposed to most violent temptations, Rev. xix. 6. Unto this end are we called hereunto by God himself, in his answer unto the despondent complaints of the church in its greatest dangers and calamities. Isa. xl. 28, 29, 30, 31. 'Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that 'the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of 'the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is 'weary? There is no searching of his under-'standing. He giveth power to the faint, and 'to them that have no might he encreaseth 'strength. Even the youths shall faint and be 'weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 'But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew 'their strength: They shall mount up with wings

wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.

Take one instance, which is the continual concernment of us all. We are obnoxious unto death every moment. It is never the further from any of us because we think not of it as we ought. This will lay our bodies in the dust, from whence they will have no more disposition nor power in themselves to rise again, than any other part of the mould of the earth. Their recovery must be an act of external almighty power, when God shall have a desire to the work of his hands; when he shall call, and we shall answer him out of the dust. And it will transmit the soul into an invisible world, putting a final end unto all relations, enjoyments and circumstances here below. I speak not of them who are stout-hearted and far from righteousness, who live and die like beasts, or under the power of horrible presumption, without any due thoughts of their future and eternal state. But as unto others, what comfort or satisfaction can any man have in his life, whereon his all depends, and which is passing from him every moment; unless he hath continual thoughts of the mighty power of God, whereby he is able to receive his departing soul, and to raise his body out of the dust?

Not to insist on more particulars; This is it with them who are spiritually-minded, thus must it be with us all, if we pretend a title unto that privilege. They are filled with thoughts of God, in opposition unto that character of wicked men, that 'God is not in all their thoughts.' And it is

greatly

greatly to be feared, that many of us, when we come to be weighed in this ballance, will be found too light. Men may be in the performance of outward duties, they may hear the word with some delight, and do many things gladly, they may escape 'the pollutions that are in the world thro' 'lust,' and not run out into the same compass of excess and riot with other men; yet may they be strangers unto inward thoughts of God with delight and complacency. I cannot understand how it can be otherwise with them whose minds are over and over filled with earthly things, however they may satisfy themselves with pretences of their callings, and lawful enjoyments, or not any way inordinately set on the pleasures or profits of the world.

To walk with God, to live unto him, is not merely to be found in an abstinence from outward sins, and in the performance of outward duties, tho' with diligence in the multiplication of them. All this may be done upon such principles, for such ends, with such a frame of heart, as to find no acceptance with God. It is our hearts that he requireth, and we can no way give them unto him, but by our affections, and holy thoughts of him with delight. This it is to be spiritually-minded, this it is to walk with God. Let no man deceive himself, unless he thus abound in holy thoughts of God, unless our meditation of him be sweet unto us, all that we else pretend unto, will fail us in the day of our trial.

This is the first thing wherein we may evidence ourselves unto ourselves, to be under the conduct of

of the minding of the spirit, or to be spiritually-minded. And I have insisted the longer on it, because it contains the first sensible egress of the spring of living waters in us, the first acting of spiritual life unto our own experience. I should now proceed unto the consideration of our affections, of whose frame and state these thoughts are the only genuine exposition. But whereas there are, or may be some who are sensible of their own weakness, and deficiency in the discharge of that part of this duty in being spiritually-minded, which we have passed thro', and may fall under discouragements thereon, we must follow him as we are able who will not 'quench the smoaking flax, nor 'break the bruised reed,' by offering something unto the relief of them that are sincere, under the sense of their own weakness.

## CHAP. X.

*Sundry things tendred unto such as complain that they know not how, that they are not able to abide in holy Thoughts of God, and Spiritual or Heavenly things; for their Relief, Instruction and Direction. Rules concerning stated Spiritual Meditation.*

SOme will say, yea, many on all occasions do say, That there is not any thing in all their duty towards God wherein they are more at a loss than they are in this one, of fixing or exercising

their

their thoughts or meditations on things heavenly or spiritual. They acknowledge it a duty; they see an excellency in it, with inexpressible usefulness. But altho' they often try and attempt it, they cannot attain unto any thing, but what makes them ashamed both of it and themselves. Their minds they find are unsteady, apt to rove and wander, or give entertainment unto other things, and not to abide on the object which they design their meditation towards. Their abilities are small, their invention barren, their memories frail, and their judgments to dispose of things into right order, weak and unable. They know not what to think on for the most part, and when they fix on any thing, they are immediately at a loss as unto any progress, and so give over. Hence other thoughts, or thoughts of other things, take advantage to impose themselves on them, and what began in spiritual meditations, ends in carnal vanity. On these considerations oft-times they are discouraged to enter on the duty, oft-times give it over so soon as it is begun, and are glad if they come off without being losers by their endeavours, which often befals them. With respect unto other duties it is not so with them. Unto such as are really concerned in these things, unto whom their want and defect is a burden; who mourn under it, and desire to be freed from it, or refreshed in their conflict with it, I shall offer the things that ensue.

1. That sense of the vanity of our minds which this consideration duly attended unto will give us, ought greatly to humble and abase our souls.

Whence

Whence is it thus with us, that we cannot abide in thoughts and meditations of things spiritual and heavenly? Is it because they are such things as we have no great concernment in? It may be they are things worthless, and unprofitable, so that it is to no purpose to spend our thoughts about them. The truth is, they alone are worthy, useful and desireable, all other things in comparison of them, are but loss and dung. Or, is it because the faculties and powers of our souls were not originally suited unto the contemplation of them, and delight in them? This also is otherwise; they were all given unto us, all created of God for this end, all fitted with inclinations and power to abide with God in all things without aversation or weariness. Nothing was so natural, easy and pleasant unto them, as steadiness in the contemplation of God and his works. The cause therefore, of all this evil lies at our own doors. All this therefore, and all other evils, came upon us by the entrance of sin. And therefore Solomon in his enquiry after all the causes and effects of vanity, brings it under this head; 'Lo this only 'have I found, that God made man upright; 'but they have sought out many inventions,' Eccles. vii. 29. For hereby our minds that were created in a state of blessed adherence unto God, were wholly turned off from him, and not only so, but filled with enmity against him. In this state that vanity which is prevalent in them, is both their sin and their punishment. Their sin is in a perpetual inclination unto things vain, foolish, sensual and wicked. So the apostle describes

it at large, Ephes. iv. 17, 18, 19. Tit. iii. 3. And their punishment in that being turned off from the chiefest good, wherein alone rest is to be found, they are filled with darkness, confusion and disquietment, being like 'a troubled sea that cannot 'rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.'

By grace our minds are renewed; that is changed and delivered from this frame; but they are so partially only. The principle of vanity is no longer predominant in us, to alienate us from the life of God, or to keep us in enmity against him. Those who are so renewed do not walk in the vanity of their minds as others do, Ephes. iv. 17. They go up and down in all their ways and occasions with a stream of vain thoughts in their minds. But the remainders of it, are effectually operative in us, in all the actings of our minds towards God affecting them with uncertainty and instability. As he who hath received a great wound in any principal part of his body, tho' it may be so cured, as that death shall not immmediately ensue thereon; yet it may make him go weak and lame all his days, and hinder him in the exercise of all the powers of life. The vanity of our minds is so cured, as to deliver us from spiritual death; but yet such a wound, such a weakness doth remain, as both weakens and hinders us in all the operations of spiritual life. Hence those who have made any progress in grace, are sensible of their vanity, as the greatest burden of their souls, and do groan after such a compleat renovation of their minds, as whereby they may be perfectly freed from it. This is that which they

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principally regard in that complaining desire, Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am, who 'shall deliver me from this body of death?' Yea, they groan under a sense of it every day, nor is any thing such a trouble unto them, observing how it defeats them in their designs to contemplate on heavenly things; how it frustrates their best resolutions to abide in the spiritual actings of faith and love; how they are imposed on by it with the thoughts of things, which either in themselves, or in their consequences, they must abhor; nothing are they so afraid of, nothing is so grievous and burdensome unto them, nothing do they more groan for deliverance from. When their is war in any place, it behoveth them that are concerned, to have an eye and regard unto all their enemies, and their attempts against them. But if they are vigilant and diligent in their opposition unto those that are without, that visibly contend with them, and, in the mean time, neglect such as traiterously act within among themselves, betraying their councils, and weakning their strength, they will be undoubtedly ruined. Wise men do first take care of what is within, as knowing if they are there betrayed, all they do against their open enemies is to no purpose. In the warfare wherein we are engaged, we have enemies of all sorts that openly and visibly in various temptations fight against our souls. These it is our duty to watch against, to conflict with, and to seek a conquest over. But it is this internal vanity of mind, that endeavours in all things to betray us, to weaken us in all our graces, or to hinder their due opera-

tions; and to open the doors of our hearts unto our cursed enemies. If our principal endeavour be not to discover, suppress and destroy this traitor, we shall not succeed in our spiritual warfare.

This therefore being the original cause of all that disability of mind, as unto steadiness in holy thoughts and meditations, whereof you do complain, when you are affected therewith, turn unto the consideration of that from whence it doth proceed. Labour to be humbled greatly, and to walk humbly under a sense of the remainders of this vanity of mind. So some wholesome fruits may be taken from this bitter root; and meat may come out of this eater. If when you cannot abide in holy thoughts of God, and your relation unto him, you reflect on this cause of it, to your further humiliation and self-abasement, your good designs and purposes are not lost. Let such an one say; "I began to think of God, of his "love and grace in Christ Jesus, of my duty to-"wards him; and where now in a few minutes do "I find myself? I am got into the ends of the "earth, into things useless and earthly; or am at "such a loss as that I have no mind to proceed in "the work wherein I was engaged. O wretched "man that I am, what a cursed enemy have I with-"in me! I am ashamed of myself, weary of my-"self, loath myself, who shall deliver me from "this body of death?" Such thoughts may be as useful unto him as those which he first designed.

True it is we can never be freed absolutely from all the effects of this vanity and instability of

of [illegible] world. Unto[illegible] unto God always, in all the powers and affecti-ons of our minds, is reserved for heaven. But yet great degrees may be attained in the conquest and expulsion of it, such, as I fear, few have experience of; yet ought all to labour after. If we apply ourselves, as we ought, to the increase of spiritual light and grace; if we labour diligently to abide and abound in thoughts of spiritual things, and that in love to them, and delight in them; if we watch against the entertainment and approbation of such thoughts and things in our minds, as whereby this vain frame is pleased and confirmed; there is, tho' not an absolute perfection, yet a blessed degree of heavenly-mindedness to be attained, and therein the nearest approach unto glory, that, in this world, we are capable of. If a man cannot attain an athletick constitution of health, or a strength like that of Sampson; yet, if he be wise, he will not omit the use of such means, as may make him to be useful in the ordinary duties of life. And, altho' we cannot attain perfection in this matter, which yet is our duty to be continually pressing after; yet, if we are wise, we will be endeavouring such a cure of this spiritual distemper, as we may be able to discharge all the duties of the life of God. But if men in all other things, feed the vanity of their own minds, if they permit them to rove continually after things foolish, sensual and earthly; if they wilfully supply them with objects unto that end, and labour not by all means for the mortification of this evil frame; in vain shall they desire or ex-

possessing them, at any time, on any occasion, to be steady in the thoughts of heavenly things. If it be thus with any, as it is to be feared it is with many, it is their duty to mind the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in the first place, 'Make the 'tree good, and then the fruit will be good,' and not before. When the power of sanctifying grace hath made the mind habitually spiritual and heavenly, thoughts of such things will be natural unto it, and accompanied with delight. But they will not be so until the God of peace have sanctified us in our whole spirits, souls and bodies, whereby we may be preserved blameless unto the coming of Jesus Christ.

2. Be always sensible of your own insufficiency to raise in your minds or to manage spiritual thoughts, or thoughts of things spiritual and heavenly in a due manner. But in this case men are apt to suppose, that as they may, so they can think of what they please. Thoughts are their own, and therefore be they of what sort they will, they need no assistance for them. They cannot think as they ought, they can do nothing at all. And nothing will convince them of their folly, until they are burdened with an experience of the contrary, as unto spiritual things. But the advice given is expressly laid down by the apostle in the instance of himself. 2 Cor. iii. 5. 'Not that we 'are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as 'of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.' He speaks principally of ministers of the gospel, and that of such as were most eminently furnished with spiritual gifts and graces, as he declares

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[illegible] be so with them [illegible] respect unto the work and duties of th[illegible] how much more is it so with others, wh[illegible] not their graces nor their offices? Wherefore, if men without regard unto the present actual grace of God, and the supplies of his Spirit, do suppose that they can of themselves, exercise their minds in spiritual thoughts, and so only fret at themselves when they fall into disappointments, not knowing what is the matter with them, they will live in a lifeless barren frame all their days.

By the strength of their natural abilities, men may frame thoughts of God, and heavenly things in their minds, according unto the knowledge they have of them. They may methodize them by rules of art, and express them elegantly unto others. But even while they do so, they may be far enough from being spiritually-minded. For there may be in their thoughts, no actings of faith, love, or holy delight in God, or any grace at all. But such alone are things which we enquire after, they are such only as wherein the graces of the Spirit are in their proper exercise. With respect unto them we have no sufficiency in ourselves, all our sufficiency must be of God. There is no truth among persons of light and knowledge more generally granted in the notion of it than this, that of ourselves we can do nothing; and none more neglected in daily practice. Men profess they can do nothing of themselves, and yet go about their duties, as if they could do all things.

3. Remember that I have not at present treated of solemn stated meditation. Concerning

[illegible] rules and instructions ought to be given. By solemn or stated meditation, I intend the thoughts of some subject spiritual and divine, with the fixing, forcing and ordering our thoughts about it, with a design to affect our own hearts and souls, with the matter of it, or the things contained in it. By this design it is distinguished from the study of the world, wherein our principal aim is to learn the truth, or to declare it unto others. And so also from prayer, whereof God himself is the immediate object. But in meditation, it is the affecting of our own hearts and minds with love, delight, and humiliation. At present I have only shewed, what it is to be spiritually-minded, and that, in this instance of our thoughts, as they proceed from the habitual frame of our hearts and affections; or, of what sort the constant course of our thoughts ought to be, with respect unto all the occasions of the life of God. This persons may be in a readiness for, who are yet unskilful in, and unable for stated meditation. For there is required thereunto, such an exercise of our natural faculties and abilities, as some thro' their weakness and ignorance, are incapable of. But as unto what we have hitherto insisted on, it is not unattainable by any, in whom is the spirit of faith and love: For it is but the frequent actings of them that I intend. Wherefore, do your hearts and affections lead you unto many thoughts of God, and spiritual things? Do they spring up in you, as water in a well of living waters? Are you ready, on all occasions, to entertain such thoughts, and to be conversant with them,

them, as opportunity doth offer itself? Do you labour to have in a readiness what is usefull for you with respect unto temptations and duties? Is God in Christ, and the things of the gospel, the ordinary retreat of your souls? Tho' you should not be able to carry on an orderly stated meditation in your minds, yet you may be spiritually-minded.

A man may not have a capacity and ability to carry on a great trade of merchandize in the world. The knowledge of all sorts of commodities, and seasons, of the world, and nations of it, with those contrivances and accounts which belong unto such trade, may be above his comprehension, and he may quickly ruin himself in undertaking such an employment. Yet may the abilities of this man serve him well enough to carry on a retail trade in a private shop; wherein, perhaps, he may thrive as well, and get as good an estate as any of those whose greater capacities lead them forth unto more large and hazardous employments. So it may be with some in this case. The natural faculties of their minds are not sufficient to enable them unto stated meditation. They cannot cast things into that method and order which is required thereunto: nor frame the conceptions of their minds into words significant and expressive; yet, as unto frequency of thoughts of God, and a disposition of mind thereunto, they may thrive and be skilful beyond most others of greater natural abilities. Howbeit, because even stated meditation is a necessary duty, yea, the principal way whereby our spiritual thoughts do

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profitably act themselves. I shall have regard thereunto in the following direction; wherefore,

4. Whatever principle of grace we have in our minds, we cannot attain unto a ready exercise of it in a way of spiritual meditation, or otherwise, without great diligence, nor without great difficulty.

It was shewed, at the entrance of this discourse, that there is a difference in this grace, between the essence, substance or reality of it, which we would not exclude men from, under many failings or infirmities; and the useful degrees of it, wherein it hath its principal exercise. As there is a difference in life natural, and its actings, in a weak diseased sickly body, and in that which is of a good constitution and in a vigorous health. Supposing the first, the reality of this grace, be wrought in us, or implanted in our minds by the holy Ghost, as a principal part of that new nature, which is the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; yet unto the growth and improvement of it, as of all other graces, our own diligent care, watchfulness, and spiritual striving in all holy duties are required. Unless the most fruitful ground be manured, it will not bring forth an useful crop. Let not any think that this frame of a spiritual mind, wherein there is a disposition unto, and a readiness for all holy thoughts of God, of Christ, of spiritual and heavenly things, at all times, and on all occasions, will befal him, and continue with him, he knows not how. As good it is for a poor man to expect to be rich in this world, without industry, or a

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weak man to be ſtrong and healthy, [illegible] and exerciſe, as to be ſpiritually-minded, [illegible] an earneſt endeavour after it. It may be enquired, what is requiſite thereunto? And we may name ſome of thoſe things, without which ſuch an holy frame will not be attained. As,

1. A continual watch is to be kept in and on the ſoul againſt the incurſions of vain thoughts and imaginations, eſpecially in ſuch ſeaſons wherein they are apt to obtain advantage. If they are ſuffered to make an inroad into the mind, if we accuſtom ourſelves to give them entertainment, if they are wont to lodge within, in vain ſhall we hope or deſire to be ſpiritually-minded. Herein conſiſts a principal part of that duty, which our Saviour ſo frequently, ſo emphatically, chargeth on us all; namely, to watch, Mark iii. 37. Unleſs we keep a ſtrick watch herein, we ſhall be betrayed into the hands of our ſpiritual enemies; for all ſuch thoughts are but making proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil its deſires in the luſts thereof, however they may be diſappointed as unto actual ſin. This is the ſubſtance of the advice given us in charge, Prov. iv. 23. 'Keep thy heart with 'all diligence, for out of it are the iſſues of life.'

2. Careful avoidance of all ſocieties and buſineſſes of this life, which are apt, under various pretences, to draw and ſeduce the mind unto an earthly or ſenſual frame. If men will venture on thoſe things which they have found by experience, or may find by obſervation, that they ſeduce and draw off their minds from an heavenly frame unto that which is contrary thereunto, and

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will not watch unto their avoidance, they will be filled with the fruit of their own ways. Indeed the common converses of professors among themselves, and others, walking, talking, and behaving themselves like other men, being as full of the world as the world is of itself, hath lost the grace of being spiritually-minded within, and stained the glory of profession without. The rule observed by David will manifest how careful we ought to be herein, Psal. xxxix. 1, 2, 3. 'I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin 'not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with 'a bridle while the wicked is before me. I was 'dumb with silence, I held my peace even from 'good, and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was 'hot within me, while I was musing the fire bur-'ned: Then spake I with my tongue:' Which place was spoken unto before.

3. An holy constraint put on the mind to abide in the duty of spiritual thoughts and meditations, pressing it continually with the consideration of their necessity and usefulness. The mind will be apt of itself to start aside from duties purely spiritual, thro' the mixture of the flesh abiding in it. The more inward and purely spiritual any duty is, which hath no outward advantages; the more prone will the mind be to decline from it. It will be so, more from private prayer than public, more from meditation than prayer. And other things will be apt to draw it aside by objects without, and various stirrings of the affections within. An holy constraint is to be put upon it, with a sudden rejection of what rises up to its diversion

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or disturbance. Wherefore, we are to call in all constraining motives, such as the consideration of the love of Christ, 2 Cor. v. 14. to keep the mind steady unto its duty.

4. Diligent use of means to furnish the soul with that light and knowledge of heavenly things, which may administer continual matter of holy thoughts and meditations from within ourselves. This hath been spoken unto at large before. And the want hereof is that which keeps many from the least proficiency in these duties. As a man may have some skill or ability for a trade, yet if he have no materials to work upon, he must sit and let his trade alone. And so must men do, as unto the work of holy meditation: Whatever be the ability of the natural faculties, their inventions or memories, if they are not furnished with knowledge of things spiritual and heavenly, which are the subject matter of such meditations, they must let their work alone. Hence the apostle prays for the Colossians, that the word of God might 'dwell in them richly in all wisdom,' chap. iii. 16. That is, that they might abound in the knowledge of the mind of Christ, without which we shall be unfit for this duty.

5. Unweariedness in our conflict with Satan, who by various artifices, and the injection of fiery darts, labours continually to divert us from these duties. He is seldom or never wanting unto this occasion. He who is furnished in any measure with spiritual wisdom and understanding, may find him more sensibly at work in his craft and opposition with respect unto this duty, than any other

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way. When we ſtand thus before the Lord, he is always at our right hand to reſiſt us. And oft-times his ſtrength is great. Hence, as was obſerved, oft-times men deſign really to exerciſe themſelves in holy thoughts, but end in vain imaginations, and rather take up with trifles, than continue in this duty. Steadineſs in the reſiſtance of him on theſe occaſions, is one great part of our ſpiritual warfare. And we may know that he is at work by his engines and methods. For they conſiſt in his ſuggeſtions of vain, fooliſh or corrupt imaginations. When they begin to riſe in our minds, at ſuch times as we would engage them in ſpiritual meditation, we may know aſſuredly from whence they are.

6. Continual watchful care, that no root of bitterneſs ſpring up and defile us, that no luſt or corruption be predominant in us. When it is ſo, if perſons, in compliance with their convictions, do endeavour ſometimes to be exerciſed in theſe duties, they ſhall labour in the very fire, where all their endeavours will be immediately conſumed.

7. Mortification unto the world in our affections and deſires, with moderation in our endeavours after the needful things of it, are alſo neceſſary hereunto; yea, to that degree, that without them no man can in any ſenſe be ſaid to be ſpiritually-minded. For otherwiſe our affections cannot be ſo preſerved under the power of grace, as that ſpiritual things may be always ſavoury unto us.

Some it may be will ſay, "That if all theſe "things are required thereunto, it will take up a "man's

" man's whole life and time to be spiritually-" minded. They hope they may attain it at an " easier rate, and not forgoe all other advantages " and sweetnesses of life, which a strict observati-" on of these things would cast them upon."

I answer: That however it may prove an hard saying unto some, yet I must say it, and my heart would reproach me if I should not say, that if the principal part of our time be not spent about these things, whatever we supppose, we have indeed neither life nor peace. The first fruits of all were to be offered unto God, and in sacrifices he required the blood, and the fat of the inwards. If the best be not his, he will have nothing. It is so as to our time. Tell me, I pray you how you can spend your time and your lives better, or to better purpose; and I shall say, Go on and prosper. I am sure some spend so much of their time so much worse, as it is a shame to see it. Do you think you came into this world, to spend your whole time and strength in your employments, your trades, your pleasures, unto the satisfaction of the will of the flesh and of the mind? Have you time enough to eat, to drink, to sleep, to talk unprofitably, it may be corruptly, in all sorts of unnecessary societies, but have not enough to live unto God, in the very essentials of that life which consists in these things? Alas! you came into the world under this law; 'It is appointed to all men 'once to die, and after that is the judgment;' and the end why your life here is granted unto you, is that you may be prepared for that judgment. If this be neglected, if the principal part of your time

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be not improved with respect unto this end, you will fall under the sentence of it unto eternity.

But men are apt to mistake in this matter. They may think that these things tend to take them off from their lawful employments and recreations, which they are generally afraid of, and unwilling to purchase any frame of mind at so dear a rate. They may suppose, that to have men spiritually-minded, we would make them mopes, and to disregard all the lawful occasions of life. But let not any be mistaken; I am not upon a design that will be easily, or it may be honestly defeated. Men are able to defend themselves in their callings and enjoyments, and to satisfy their consciences against any perswasions to the contrary. Yet there is a season wherein we are obliged to part with all we have, and give up ourselves wholly to follow Christ in all things; Math. xix. 21. And if we neglect, or refuse it in that season, it is an evidence that we are hypocrites. And there was a time when superstition had so much power on the minds of men, that multitudes were perswaded to forsake, to give up all their interest in relations, callings, goods, possessions, and betake themselves unto tedious pilgrimages, yea hard services in war, to comply with that superstition; and it is not the glory of our profession, that we have so few instances of men parting with all, and giving up themselves unto heavenly retirement. But I am at present on no such design, I aim not to take men out of their lawful earthly occasions, but to bring spiritual affections and thoughts into the management

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of them all. The things mentioned will deprive you of no time you can lay a claim unto, but sanctify it all.

I confess, he must be a great proficient in spirituality, who dares venture on an absolute retirement, and must be well satisfied that he is not called unto an usefulness among men inconsistent therewith: Unto them it may prove a disadvantage: Yet this also is attainable, if other circumstances do concur. Men under the due exercise of grace, and the improvement of it, may attain unto that fixedness in heavenly-mindedness, that inconcernment in all things here below, as to give themselves up intirely and continually unto heavenly meditation, unto a blessed advancement of all grace, and a near approach unto glory. And I would hope it was so with many of them in ancient times, who renounced the world, with all circumstances or relations, state, inheritances, and betook themselves unto retirement in wildernesses, to abide always in divine contemplation. But afterwards when multitudes whose minds were not so prepared, by a real growth in all grace and mortification unto the world, as they were, betook themselves under the same pretences unto a monastical retirement; the devil, the world, sensual lusts, superstition, and all manner of evils pursued them, found them out, possessed them, unto the unspeakable damage and scandal of religion.

This therefore is not that which I invite the common sort of believers unto. Let them that are able and free, receive it. The generality of

Christians have lawful callings, employments and businesses, which ordinarily they ought to abide in. That they also may live unto God in their occasions, they may do well to consider two things.

1. Industry in mens callings is a thing in itself very commendable. If in nothing else, it hath an advantage herein, that it is a means to preserve men from those excesses in lust and riot, which otherwise they are apt to run into. And if you consider the two sorts of men, whereinto the generality of mankind are distributed, namely, Of them who are industrious in their affairs, and those who spend their time so far as they are able in idleness and pleasure; the former sort are far more amiable and desirable. Howbeit it is capable of being greatly abused. Earthly-mindedness, covetousness, devouring things holy, as to times and seasons of duty, uselesness, and the like pernicious vices do invade and possess the minds of men. There is no lawful calling that doth absolutely exclude this grace of being spiritually-minded in them that are engaged in it, nor any that doth include it. Men may be in the meanest of lawful callings, and be so; and men may be in the best and highest, and not be so: Consider the calling of the ministry: The work and duty of it calls on those that are employed in it, to have their minds and thoughts conversant about spiritual and heavenly things. They are to study about them, to meditate on them, to commit them unto memory, to speak them out unto others. It will be said, Surely such men must needs be spiritually-minded. If they go

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no further than what is mentioned, I say they must needs be so, as printers must needs be learned, who are continually coversant about letters. A man may with great industry engage himself in these things, and yet his mind be most remote from being spiritual. The event doth declare that it may be so, and the reasons of it are manifest. It requires as much, if not more watchfulness, more care, more humility, for a minister to be spiritually-minded in the discharge of his calling, than to any sort of men in theirs: And that, as for other reasons, so because the commonness of the exercise of such thoughts, with their design upon others in their expression, will take off their power and efficacy. And he will have little benefit by his own ministry, who endeavours not in the first place, an experience in his own heart of the power of the truths which he doth teach unto others. And there is evidently as great a failing herein among us, as among any other sort of Christians, as every occasion of trial doth demonstrate.

2. Altho' industry in any honest calling be allowable, yet unless men labour to be spiritually-minded in the exercise of that industry, they have neither life nor peace. Hereunto all the things before-mentioned, are necessary; I know not how any of them can be abated, yea, more is required than is expressed in them. If you burn this roll, another must be written, and many like things must be added unto it. And the objection from the expence of time in the observance of them, is of no force. For a man may do as much



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work whil'ſt he is ſpiritually-minded, as whil'ſt he is carnal. Spiritual thoughts will no more hinder you in your callings, than thoſe that are vain and earthly, which all ſorts of men can find leiſure for in the midſt of their employments. If you have filled a veſſel with chaff, yet you may pour into it a great deal of water, which will be contained in the ſame ſpace and veſſel. And, if it be neceſſary that you ſhould take in much of the chaff of the world into your minds, yet are they capable of ſuch meaſures of grace as ſhall preſerve them ſincere unto God.

Fifthly, This frame will never be preſerved, nor the duties mentioned be ever performed in a due manner, unleſs we dedicate ſome part of our time peculiarly unto them. I ſpeak unto them only concerning whom I ſuppoſe that they do daily ſet apart ſome portion of time unto holy duties, as prayer and reading of the word, and they find by experience that it ſucceeds well with them. For the moſt part if they loſe their ſeaſons, they loſe their duties. For ſome have complained, that the urgency of buſineſs, and multiplicity of occaſions, driving them at firſt from the fixed time of their duties, hath brought them into a courſe of neglecting duty itſelf. Wherefore, it is our wiſdom to ſet apart conſtantly, ſome part of our time, unto the exerciſe of our thoughts about ſpiritual things in the way of meditation. And I ſhall cloſe this diſcourſe with ſome directions in this particular, unto them who complain of their diſability for the diſcharge of this duty.

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time of freedom from other occasions and diversions. And because it is our duty to redeem time, with respect unto holy duties, such a season may be the more useful, the more the purchase of it stands us in. We are not, at any time, to serve God with what costs us nought, nor with any time that comes within the same rule. If we will allow only the refuse of our time unto this duty, when we have nothing else to do, and it may be through weariness of occasions are fit for nothing else, we are not to expect any great success in it. This is one pregnant reason, why men are so cold and formal, so lifeless in spiritual duties, namely, The times and seasons which they allot unto them. When the body is wearied with the labour and occasions of the day, and it may be, the mind in its natural faculties indisposed, even by the means of necessary refreshment, men think themselves meet to treat with God about the great concernments of his glory, and their own souls. This is that which God condemneth by the prophet, Mal. i. 1. 'And if you offer the 'blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if you offer 'the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now un'to thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, 'or accept thy person?' Both the law of nature, and all the laws of holy institutions, do require, that we should serve God with the best that we have, as all the fat of the inwards was to be offered in sacrifice. And, shall we think to offer that time unto God, wherein we are unmeet to appear before an earthly ruler? Yet such, in my account, are the seasons, especially the evening

seasons, that most men chuse for the duties of their holy worship. And you may do well to consider, that beyond the day and time which he hath taken unto himself by an everlasting law, how little of the choice of your time you have offered unto God as a free-will-offering, that you may be excited to future diligence. If therefore you seriously intend this duty, choose the seasons for it wherein you are most fit, when even the natural vigour of your spirits is most free and active. Possibly some will say, This may be such a time as when the occasions of the world do call most earnestly for your attendance unto them. I say that is the season I would recommend. And if you can conquer your minds to redeem it for God at that rate, your endeavours in it will be prosperous. However, trust not to times that will offer themselves. Take them not up at hazard. Let the time itself be a free-will offering to God, taken from the top of the heap, or the choicest part of your useful time.

(2.) Preparation of mind unto a due reverence of God and spiritual things, is required previously hereunto. When we go about this duty, if we rush into thoughts of heavenly things without a due reverential preparation, we shall quickly find ourselves at a loss. See the rule, Eccles. v. 1, 2. 'Grace to serve God with reverence 'and godly fear,' is required in all things, wherein we have to do with him, as in this duty we have in an immediate and especial manner. Endeavour therefore, in the first place, to get your hearts deeply affected with an awful reverence of

of God, and an holy regard unto the heavenly nature of the things you would meditate upon. Hereby your minds will be composed, and the roots of other thoughts, be they vain or earthly, which are apt to arise and divert you from this duty, will be cast out. The principles of these contrary thoughts are like Jacob and Esau, they struggle in the same womb, and oftentimes Esau will come first forth, and for a while seem to carry the birth-right. If various thoughts do conflict in our minds, some for this world, and some for another, those for this world may carry it for a season. But where a due reverence of God hath cast out the bond-woman and her children, the workings of the flesh, in its vain thoughts and imaginations, the mind will be at liberty to exercise itself on spiritual things.

(3.) Earnest desires after a renewed sense and relish of spiritual things are required hereunto. If we engage into this duty, merely on a conviction of the necessity of it, or set ourselves about it, because we think we ought to do so, and it will not be well done utterly to neglect it, we may not expect to be successful in it: But when the soul hath at any time tasted that the Lord is gracious, when its meditations on him have been sweet, when spiritual things have had a savour and relish in the mind and affections, and hereon it comes unto this duty with earnest desires to have the like tastes, the like experience, yea, to have them encreased; then is it in the way of an hopeful progress. And this also will make us persevere in our endeavours to go thro' with what we under-

take; namely, When we do know by former experience what is to be attained in it, if we dig and search for it as treasure.

If you shall think that the right discharge of this duty may be otherwise attained; if you suppose, that it deserves not all this cost and charge about it; judge by what is past, whether it be not adviseable to give it over and let it alone. As good ly quietly on the ground, as continually attempt to rise, and never once affect it. Remember how many successless attempts you have made upon it, and all have come to nothing, or that which is as bad as nothing. I cannot say, that in this way you shall always succeed; but I fear you will never have success in this duty, without such things as are of the same nature and use with it.

When after this preparation, you find yourselves yet perplexed and entangled, not able comfortably to persist in spiritual thoughts, unto your refreshment, take these two directions for your relief.

1. Cry and sigh to God for help and relief. Bewail the darkness, weakness, and instability of your minds, so as to groan within yourselves for deliverance. And if your designed meditations do issue only in a renewed gracious sense of your own weakness and insufficiency, with application unto God for supplies of strength, they are, by no means, lost, as unto a spiritual account. The thoughts of Hezekiah in his meditations did not seem to have any great order or consistency, when he so exprest them; 'Like a crane or a swallow so 'did

'did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove: Mine 'eyes failed with looking upwards: O Lord I am 'oppreſſed, undertake for me;' Iſa. xxxviii. 14. When the ſoul labours ſincerely for communion with God, but ſinks into broken confuſed thoughts under the weight of its own weakneſs, yet if he looks to God for relief, his chattering and mourning will be accepted with God, and profitable unto himſelf.

2. Supply the brokenneſs of your thoughts with ejaculatory prayers, according as either the matter of them, or your defect in the management of them doth require. So was it with Hezekiah in the inſtance before mentioned; where his own meditations were weak and broken, he cries out in the midſt of them, 'O Lord, I am 'oppreſſed, undertake for me.' And meditation is properly a mixture of ſpiritual apprehenſion of God and heavenly things, in the thoughts and conceptions of the mind, with deſires and ſupplications thereon.

It is good and profitable to have ſome ſpecial deſigned ſubject of meditation in our thoughts. I have at large declared before, what things are the proper objects of the thoughts of them that are ſpiritually-minded. But they may be more peculiarly conſidered as the matter of deſigned meditation. And they may be taken out of ſome eſpecial ſpiritual experience that we have lately had, or ſome warnings we have received of God, or ſomething wherewith we have been peculiarly affected in the reading or preaching of the word, or what we find the preſent poſture and

frame

frame of our minds and souls to require; or that which supplies all most frequently, the person and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. If any thing of this nature be peculiarly designed, antecedently unto this duty, and a season be sought for it with respect thereunto, the mind will be fixed, and kept from wandering after variety of subjects, wherein it is apt to lose itself, and brings nothing to perfection.

Lastly, Be not discouraged with an apprehension, that all that you can attain unto in the discharge of this duty is so little, so contemptible, as that it is to no purpose to persist in it. Nor be wearied with the difficulties you meet withal in its performance. You have to do with him only in this matter, who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax; whose will it is, that none should despise the day of small things. And if there be in this duty a ready mind, it is accepted, according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not. He that can bring into this treasure only the mites of broken desires, and ejaculatory prayers, so they be his best, shall not come behind them who cast into it out of their greater abundance, in ability and skill. To faint and give over, because we cannot arise unto such a height as we aim at, is a fruit of pride and unbelief. He who finds himself to gain nothing by continual endeavours after holy fixed meditations, but only a living active sense of his own vileness and unworthiness, is a sufficient gainer by all his pains, cost and charge. But ordinarily it shall not be so; constancy in the duty will

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give ability for in. Those who conscientiously abide in its performance, shall increase in light, wisdom and experience, untill they are able to manage it with great success. These few plain directions may possibly be of some use unto the weaker sort of Christians, when they find a disability in themselves unto the discharge of this duty, wherein those who are spiritually-minded ought to be peculiarly exercised.

# PART II.

## CHAP. XI.

*The Seat of Spiritual-Mindedneſs in the Affections. The Nature and uſe of them. The Ways and Means uſed by God himſelf, to call the Affections of Men from the World.*

IN the account given at the entrance of this diſcourſe, of what it is to be ſpiritually-minded, it was reduced unto three heads.

The firſt was, The habitual frame, diſpoſition, and inclination of the mind in its affections.

The ſecond was, The uſual exerciſe of the mind in its thoughts, meditations, and deſires about heavenly things.

Whereunto, thirdly, was added, The complacency of mind in that reliſh and ſavour which it finds in ſpiritual things, ſo thought and meditated on.

The ſecond of theſe hath hitherto alone been ſpoken unto, as that which leads the way unto the others, and gives the moſt ſenſible evidence of the ſtate enquired after. Therein conſiſts the ſtream, which riſing in the fountain of our affections,

tions, turn into a holy rest and complacency of mind.

The first and last, I shall now handle together, and therein comprehend the account of what it is to be spiritually-minded.

"Spiritual affections, whereby the soul adheres "unto spiritual things, taking in such a savour and "relish of them, as wherein it finds rest and satis-"faction, is the peculiar spring and substance of "our being spiritually-minded." This is that which I shall now further explain and confirm.

The great contest of heaven and earth is about the affections of the poor worm, which we call man. That the world should contend for them, is no wonder. It is the best that it can pretend unto. All things here below, are capable of no higher ambition, than to be possessed of the affections of men. And as they ly under the curse, it can do us no greater mischief, than by prevailing in this design. But that the holy God should, as it were, engage in the contest, and strive for the affections of man, is an effect of infinite condescention and grace. This he doth expressly; 'My son' saith he, 'give me thy heart,' Prov. xxiii. 26. It is our affections he asketh for, and comparatively nothing else; to be sure he will accept of nothing from us without them. The most fat and costly sacrifice will not be accepted, if it be without a heart. All the ways and methods of the dispensation of his will, by his word, all the designs of his effectual grace, are suited unto, and prepared for this end, namely, to recover the affections of man unto himself. So he

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expresseth himself concerning his word. Deut. x. 12. 'And now Israel, What doth the Lord 'thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord 'thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love, 'and to serve the Lord thy God, with all thy 'heart, and with all thy soul.' And as unto the word of his grace, he declares it unto the same purpose, Deut. xxx. 6. 'And the Lord thy God 'will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy 'seed; to love the Lord thy God will all thy 'heart, and with all thy soul.'

And, on the other side, all the artifices of the world, all the paint it puts on its face, all the great promises it makes, all the false appearances and attires it cloaths itself withal by the help of Satan, have no other end, but; to draw, and keep the affections of men unto itself. And if the world be preferred before God, in this address which is made unto us, for our affections, we shall justly perish with the world unto eternity; and be rejected by him whom we have rejected, Prov. i. 24, 25, 31.

Our affections are, upon the matter, our all. They are all we have to give or bestow; the only power of our souls, whereby, we may give away ourselves from ourselves, and become anothers. Other faculties of our souls, even the most noble of them, are suited to receive in unto our own advantage; by our affections we can give away what we are, and have. Hereby, we give our hearts unto God, as he requireth. Wherefore unto him we give our affections, unto whom we give our all, ourselves, and all that we have;

and

and to whom we give them not, whatever we give upon the matter, we give nothing at all.

In what we do unto, or for others; whatsoever is good, valuable, or praise-worthy in it, proceeds from the affections wherewith we do it. To do any thing for others without an animating affection, is but a contempt of them, for we judge them really unworthy, that we should do any thing for them: To give to the poor upon their importunity, without pity or compassion; to supply the wants of saints without love, and kindness, with other actings and duties of the like nature, are things of no value, things that recommend us neither unto God nor men. It is so in general with God and the world. Whatsoever we do in the service of God, whatever duty we perform on his command, whatever we undergo, or suffer for his name's sake, if it proceed not from the cleaving of our souls unto him by our affections, it is despised by him, he owns us not. 'As if a man 'would give all the substance of his house for 'love, it would utterly be contemned,' Cant. v. It is not to be bought nor purchased with riches; So if a man would give to God all the substance of his house without love, it would in like manner be despised. And however, on the other hand, we may be diligent, industrious, and sedulous in and about the things of this world, yet, if it have not our affections, we are not of the world, we belong not unto it. They are the seat of all sincerity, which is the jewel of divine and human conversation, the life and soul of every thing that is good and praise-worthy, whatever men pretend, as

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What affections are, ſo are they. Hypocriſy is a deceitful interpoſition of the mind, on various reaſons and pretences, between mens affections and their profeſſion, whereby a man appears to be what he is not. Sincerity is the open avowment of the reality of mens affections, which renders them good and uſeful.

Affections are in the ſoul, as the helm in the ſhip, if it be laid hold on by a ſkilful hand, he turneth the whole veſſel which way he pleaſeth. If God hath the powerful hand of his grace upon our affections, he turns our ſouls unto a compliance with his inſtitutions, inſtructions, in mercy, affections, tryals, all ſorts of providences, and holds them firm againſt all winds and ſtorms of temptations, that they ſhall not hurry them on pernicious dangers. Such a ſoul alone is tractable and pliable unto all intimations of God's will.

All others are ſtubborn and obſtinate, ſtout-hearted and far from righteouſneſs. And when the world hath the hand on our affections, it turns the mind, with the whole induſtry of the ſoul unto its intereſt and concerns. And it is in vain to contend with any thing that hath the power of our affections in its diſpoſal, it will prevail at laſt.

On all theſe conſiderations, it is of the higheſt importance to conſider aright how things are ſtated in our affections, and what is the prevailing bent of them. 'Iron ſharpneth iron, ſo a man ſharpneth the countenance of his friend,' ſaith the wiſe man, Prov. xxvii. 17. Every man hath his edge, which may be ſharpened by outward helps and advantages. The predominant inclination

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of a man's affections, is his edge. According that is set, so he cutteth and works; that way is sharp and keen, but blunt unto all other things.

Now because it must be, that our affections are either spiritual or earthly in a prevailing degree; that either God hath our hearts, or the world; that our edge is towards heaven, or towards things here below: Before I come to give an account of the nature and operations of spiritual affections, I shall consider and propose some of those arguments and motives which God is pleased to make use of, to call off our affections from the desirable things of this world; for as they are weighty and cogent, such as cannot be neglected, without the greatest contempt of divine wisdom and goodness; so they serve to press and enforce those arguments and motives, that are proposed unto us, to set our affections on things that are above, which is to be spiritually-minded.

First, He hath in all manner of instances poured contempt on the things of this world, in comparison of things spiritual and heavenly. All things here below were at first made beautiful and in order; and were declared by God himself to be exceeding good; and that not only in their being and nature, but in the use whereunto they were designed. They were then desirable unto men, and the enjoyment of them would have been a blessing without danger of temptation: For they were the ordinance of God, to lead us unto the knowledge of him, and love unto him. But since the entrance of sin, whereby the world fell under the curse, and into the power of Satan, the

things of it, in his management, are become effectual means to draw off the heart and the affections from God. For, it is the world, and the things of it, as summed up by the apostle, 1 John ii. 15, 16. that alone strive for our affections to be the object of them. Sin and Satan do but woo for the world to take them off from God. By them doth the God of this world, blind the eyes of them that believe not, and the principal way whereby he worketh in them, is by promises of satisfaction unto all the lusts of the minds of men, with a proposal of whatever is dreadful and terrible in the want of them. Being now in this state and condition, and used unto this end, thro' the craft of Satan, and the folly of the minds of men: God hath shewed by various instances, that they are all vain, empty, unsatisfactory, and every way to be despised, in comparison of things eternal.

1st, He did it most eminently and signally in the life, death, and cross of Christ. What can be seen or found in this world, after the Son of God hath spent his life in it, not having where to lay his head; and after he went out of it on the cross. Had there been ought of real worth in things here below; certainly he had enjoyed, if not crowns and empires, which where all in his power, yet such goods and possessions as men of sober reasonings, and moderate affections, do esteem a competency. But things were quite otherwise disposed, to manifest that there is nothing of value, or use in these things, but only to support nature unto the performance of service unto God, wherein

in they are ſerviceable unto eternity. [illegible] attained; he never enjoyed more then daily ſupplies of bread out of the ſtores of providence, and which alone he hath inſtructed us to pray for. Mat. viii. 20. In his croſs the world proclaimed all its good qualities and all its powers, and hath given unto them that believe, its naked face to view and contemplate. Nor is it now one jot more comely, than it was when it had gotten Chriſt on the croſs. Hence is that inference and concluſion of the apoſtle; Gal. vi. 14. 'But God forbid 'that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our 'Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whereby the world is crucifi-'ed unto me, and I unto the world.' Since I have believed, ſince I have had a ſenſe of the power and virtue of the croſs of Chriſt, I have done with all things in this world; it is a dead thing unto me, nor have I any affection for it. This is that which made the difference between the promiſes of the old covenant, and the new, for they were many of them about temporal things, the good things of this world, and this life; thoſe of the new, are moſtly of things ſpiritual and eternal. God would not call off the church wholly from a regard unto theſe things, until he had given a demonſtration of their emptineſs, vanity, and inſufficiency in the croſs of Chriſt, 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 18.

Whither ſo faſt my friend? What meaneth this riſing ſo early, and going to bed late, eating the bread of carefulneſs? Why this diligence, why theſe contrivances, why theſe ſavings and hoardings of riches, and wealth? To what end

is all this care and counſel? Alas, ſaith one, it is to get that which is enough in and of this world, for me and my children, to prefer them, to raiſe an eſtate for them, which if not ſo great as others, may yet be a competency, to give them ſome ſatisfaction in their lives, and ſome reputation in the world. Fair pretences, neither ſhall I ever diſcourage any from the exerciſe of induſtry in their lawful callings: But yet I know, that with many, this is but a pretence and covering for a ſhameful engagement of their affections unto the world. Wherefore in all theſe things, be perſuaded ſometimes to have an eye to Jeſus, the author and finiſher of our faith; behold, how he is ſet before us in the goſpel, poor, deſpiſed, reproached, perſecuted, nailed to the croſs, and all by this world. Whatever be your deſigns and aims, let his croſs continually interpoſe between your affections and this world. If you are believers, your hopes are within a few days to be with him for evermore. Unto him you muſt give an account of yourſelves, and what you have done in this world: Will it be accepted with him to declare what you have ſaved of this world, what you have gained, what you have preſerved, and embraced yourſelves in, and what you have left behind you? was this any part of his employment and buſineſs in this world; hath he left us an example for any ſuch courſe. Wherefore, no man can ſet his affections on things here below, who hath any regard unto the pattern of Chriſt, or is in any meaſure influenced with the power and efficacy of his croſs. 'My love is crucified,' ſaid an holy mar-

martyr of old; he whom his ſoul loved was ſo, and in him his love unto all things here below. Do you therefore find your affections ready to be engaged unto, or too much intangled with the things of this world; are your deſires of encreaſing them, your hopes of keeping them, and your fears of loſing them, your love unto them, and delight in them, operative in your minds, poſſeſſing your thoughts, and influencing your converſations. Turn aſide a little, and by faith contemplate the life and death of the Son of God; a bleſſed glaſs will it be, where you may ſee what contemptible things they are which you perplex yourſelves about. Oh! that any of us ſhould love or eſteem the things of this world, the power, riches, goods or reputation of it, who have had a ſpiritual view of them in the croſs of Chriſt.

It may be, it will be ſaid, that the circumſtances mentioned, were neceſſary unto the Lord Chriſt, with reſpect unto the eſpecial work he had to do, as the Saviour and Redeemer of the church. And therefore it doth not thence follow, that we ought to be poor, and want all things as he did. I confeſs it doth not; and therefore, do all along make an allowance for honeſt induſtry in our callings. But this follows unavoidably hereon; that what he did forego and trample on for our ſakes, that ought not to be the object of our affections, nor can ſuch affections prevail in us, if he dwell in our hearts by faith.

2dly, He hath done the ſame in his dealings with the apoſtles, and generally with all that have been moſt dear unto him, and inſtrumental unto

the interest of his glory in the world, especially since life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel. He had great work to do by the apostles, and that of the greatest use unto his interest and kingdom. The laying of the foundations of the glorious kingdom of Christ in the world, was committed unto them. Who would not think that he should provide for them, if not principalities or popedoms, yet at least arch-bishopricks, and bishopricks, with other good ecclesiastical dignities and preferments? Hereby, might they have been made meet to converse with princes, and had been freed from the contempt of the vulgar: But infinite wisdom did otherwise dispose of them, and their concerns in this world. For, as God was pleased to exercise them with the common afflictions and calamities of this life, which he makes use of, to take off the sweetness of present enjoyments; so they lived and died in a condition of poverty, distress, persecution, and reproach. God set them forth as examples as unto other ends, namely, Of light, grace, zeal, and holiness in their lives, so to manifest, of how little concernment unto our own blessedness, or an interest in his love, is the abundance of all things here below; as also, that the want of them all may consist with the highest participation of his love and favour. 1 Cor. iv. 9, 11, 12, 13. 'For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death. For 'we are made a spectacle unto the world, and unto angels, and to men. Even unto this present 'hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked

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'and are buffetted, and have no certain dwelling-'place; and labour working with our own hands; 'being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we 'suffer it; being defamed, we intreat; we are 'made as the filth of the world, and are the off-'scouring of all things unto this day.' And if the consideration hereof be not of weight with others, undoubtedly, it ought to be so with them who are called to preach the gospel, and are the successors to the apostles. There can be nothing more uncouth, absurd, and shameful, nothing more opposite unto the intimation of the wisdom and will of God in his dealings with those first and most honourable dispensers of it, than for such persons to seek and follow greedily after secular advantages, in worldly powers, riches, wealth, and honour. Hence there hath been in former ages, an endeavour to separate such persons as were by any means dedicated unto the ministry of the gospel, from all secular dignities and revenues. Yea, some maintained, that they were to enjoy nothing of their own, but were to live on alms, or the free contributions of the people. But this was quickly condemned as heresy in Wickliff, and others. Yet another sort set up, that would pretend thereunto, as unto themselves, tho' they would not oblige all others unto the same rule. This produced some swarms of begging friars, whom they of the church, who were in possession of wealth and power, thought meet to laugh at and let alone; of late years, this contest is at an end. The clergy have happily gotten the victory, and esteem all due unto them,

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that they can by any ways obtain; nor is there any greater crime, than for a man to be otherwise minded. But these things are not our present concernment. 'From the beginning it was not 'so.' And it is well if in such a way, men are able to maintain the frame of mind enquired after, which is life and peace.

3dly, God continues to cast contempt on these things, by giving always incomparably the greatest portion of them unto the vilest men, and his own avowed enemies. This was a temptation under the old covenant, but is highly instructive under the new. None will judge those things to be of real value, which a wise man casts out daily unto swine, making little or no use of them in his family. Those monsters of men, Nero, and Heliogabalus had more interest in, and more power over the things of this world, than ever had the best of men. Such villains in nature, so pernicious unto human society, that their not being was the interest of mankind; but yet more of the world poured on them, than they knew either how to enjoy, possess, use, or abuse. Look on all the principal treasures and powers of this world, as in the hand of one of these monsters, and there disposed of by divine providence, and you may see at what rate God values them.

At this day, the greatest, most noble, wealthy and fruitful parts of the earth, are given unto the great Turk, with some other eastern potentates, either Mahometans or Pagans, who are prepared for eternal destruction. And if we look nearer home, we may see in whose hands is the power

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of the chiefest nations of Europe, and unto what end it is used. The utmost of what some Christian professors among ourselves are intent and designing upon, as that which would render them wondrous happy in their own apprehensions, put hundreds of them together, and it would not answer the waste made by the forementioned beasts every day.

Doth not God proclaim herein, that the things of this world are not to be valued or esteemed; if they were so, and had a real worth in themselves, would the holy and righteous God make such a distribution of them. The most of those whom he loves, who enjoy his favour, not only comparatively have the meanest share of them, but are exercised with all the evils that the destitution and want of them can be accompanied withal? His open and avowed enemies in the mean time, have more than they know what to do withal. Who would set his heart and affections on those things which God poureth into the bosoms of the vilest men, to be a snare unto them here, and an aggravation of their condemnation for ever: It seems, you may go and take the world, and take the curse, death and hell along with it, and 'what will it profit a man to gain the whole 'world, and lose his own soul.' What can any man do on the consideration hereof, who will not forego all his hopes and expectations from God, but retreat unto the faith of things spiritual and eternal, as containing an excellency in them incomparably above all that may be enjoyed here below.

4thly.

4thly, He doth continue to give perpetual instances of their uncertainty and unsatisfactoriness in the utter disappointment of men that had expectation from them. The ways hereof are various, and the instances so multiplied, as that most men in the world, unless they are like the fool in the gospel, who bad his soul take its ease for many years, because his barns were full, live in perpetual fears and apprehensions, that they shall speedily lose whatever they enjoy; or are under the power of a stupid security. But as unto this consideration of them, there is such an account given by the wise man, as unto which nothing can be added, or which no reason or experience is able to contradict, Eccles. ii. By these and the like ways doth God cast contempt on all things here below; discovering the folly and falseness of the promises which the world makes use of to allure our affections unto itself. This therefore is to be laid as the foundation in all our considerations, unto what or whom we shall cleave by our affections, that God hath not only declared the insufficiency of these things, to give us that rest and happiness which we seek after, but also poured contempt upon them, in his holy, wise disposal of them in the world.

Secondly, God hath added unto their vanity, by shortning the lives of men, reducing their continuance in this world unto so short and uncertain a season, as it is impossible they should take any solid satisfaction in what they enjoy here below. So it is expressed by the Psalmist. 'Behold thou 'hast made my days as an handbreadth, and my

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'age is nothing before thee.' Hence he draws two conclusions.

First, That 'every man at his best estate is 'vanity.

2dly, That 'every man walks in a vain shew; 'surely they are disquieted in vain, he heapeth 'up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather 'them,' Psal. xxxix. 5, 6. The uncertainty and shortness of the lives of men, render all their endeavours and contrivances about earthly things, both vain and foolish. When men lived eight or nine hundred years, they had opportunity to suck out all the sweetness that was in creature comforts, to make large provisions of them, and to have long projections about them. But when they had so, they all issued in that violence, oppression, and wickedness, which brought the flood on the world of ungodly men. And it still so abides, the more of, and the longer men enjoy these things, the more without the sovereign preservative of grace, will they abound in sin, and provocations of God. But God hath reduced the life of man unto the small pittance of seventy years; casting what may fall out of a longer continuance into travel and sorrow. Besides, that space is shortned with the most, by various and innumerable incidencies and occasions. Wherefore in these seventy years, consider how long it is before men begin to have a taste or gust of the things of this life; how many things fall in cross, to make us weary of them before the end of our days, how few among us, not one of a thousand, attain that age, what is the uncertainty of all men

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living, as to the continuance of their lives unto the next day; and we ſhall ſee that the holy, wiſe God, hath left no ſuch ſeaſon for their enjoyment, as might put a value upon them. And when, on the other hand, it is remembred, that this man who is of ſuch ſhort continuance in this world, is yet made for eternity, eternal bleſſedneſs or miſery, which ſtate depends wholly on his intereſt on things above, and ſetting his affections on them, they muſt forfeit all their reaſon, as well as bid defiance unto the grace of God who give them up unto things here below.

Thirdly, God hath openly and fully declared the danger that is in theſe things, as unto their enjoyment and uſe; and what multitudes of ſouls miſcarry, by an inordinate adherence unto them. For they are the matter of thoſe temptations, whereby the ſouls of men are ruined for ever; the fuel that ſupplies the fire of their luſts, until they are conſumed by it.

Men under the power of ſpiritual convictions, fall not into ſin, fail not eternally, but by the means of temptation; that is the mire wherein this ruſh doth grow. For others who live and die in the madneſs and wildneſs of nature, without any reſtraint in their minds from the power of convictions, they need no external temptations, but only opportunities to exert their luſts. But for thoſe who by any means are convinced of ſin, righteouſneſs and judgment, ſo as to deſign the ordering of their lives, with reſpect unto the ſenſe they have of them, they fall not into actual ſin, but upon temptations. That, whatever be, which

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cauſeth, occaſioneth, and prevaileth on a convinced perſon, unto ſin, that is temptation. Wherefore this is the great means of the ruin of the ſouls of men.

Now, tho' there are many principles of temptation, many cauſes that actually concur unto its efficacy, as ſin, Satan, and other men, yet the matter of almoſt all ruinous temptations is taken out of this world, and the things of it. Thence doth Satan take all his darts; thence do evil men derive all the ways and means whereby they corrupt others, and from thence is all the fuel of ſin, and luſt taken. And which adds unto this evil, all that is in the world, contributes its utmoſt thereunto. 'All that is in the world, 'is the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and 'pride of life,' 1 John ii. 16. It is not a direct formal enumeration of the things that are in the world, nor a diſtribution of them under ſeveral heads, but it is ſo of the principal luſts of the minds of mind, whereunto all things in the world are ſubſervient. Wherefore, not only the matter of all temptations is taken out of the world, but every thing that is the world is apt and fit to be abuſed unto that end. For it were eaſy to ſhew, that there is nothing deſirable or valuable in this whole world, but it is reducible unto a ſubſerviency unto one or other of theſe luſts, and is applicable unto the intereſt and ſervice of temptations and ſins.

When men hear of theſe things, they are apt to ſay, Let the dream be unto them that are openly wicked, and the interpretation of it unto them

them that are profligate in sin. Unto unclean persons, drunkards, oppressors, proud ambitious persons, it may be it is so; but as unto them, they use the things of this world with a due moderation, so as they are no snare unto them. But to own they are used unto what end soever, if the affections of men are set upon them, one way or other, there is nothing in the world, but is thus a snare and temptation. However we should be very careful how we adhere unto, or undervalue that which is the cause and means of the ruin of multitudes of souls. By the warnings given us hereof, doth God design, as unto the use of means, to teach us the vanity and danger of fixing our affections on things below.

Fourthly, Things are so ordered in the holy wise dispensation of God's providence, that it requires much spiritual wisdom to distinguish between the use and the abuse of these things, between a lawful care about them, and an inordinate cleaving unto them. Few distinguish aright here, and therefore in these things will many find their great mistake at the last day. The disappointments that they will fall under, as to what concerns their earthly enjoyments, and the use of them, wherewith they were intrusted, see Mat. xxv. 34. to the end of the chapter.

It is granted, that there is a lawful use of these things, a lawful care and industry about them. So it is also acknowledged, it cannot be denied, that there is an abuse of them springing from an inordinate love, and cleaving unto them. But here men deceive themselves, taking their mea-

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sures by the most crooked uncertain rules; some make their own inclinations the rule and measure of what is so lawful and allowable, some the examples of others; some the course of the world, some their own real or pretended necessities. They confess that there is an inordinate love of those things and an abuse of them, in excesses of various sorts, which the scripture plainly affirms, and which experience gives open testimony unto. But as unto their state and circumstances, their care, love, and industry are all allowable. That which influenceth all these persons, is self-love, which inveterate corrupt affections, and false reasonings do make an application of unto these occasions.

Hence we have men approving of themselves as just stewards of their enjoyments, whil'st others judge them hard, covetous, earthly-minded, no way laying out what they are intrusted withal unto the glory of God, in any due proportion. Others also think not amiss of themselves in this kind, who live in palpable excesses, either of pride of life, or sensual pleasures, vain apparel, and the like. So in particular, most men in their feastings, and entertainments, walk in direct contempt of the rules which our Saviour gives in that case; Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14. and yet approve themselves therein.

But what if any of us should be mistaken in our rule and application of it unto our conditions? Men at sea may have a fair gale of wind wherewith they may sail freely and smoothly for a season, and yet, instead of being brought into a port,

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be cast by it at last on destructive shelves or rocks.

And what if that which we esteem allowable love, care and industry, should prove to be the fruit of earthly affections, inordinate and predominant in us; what if we miss in our measures, and that which we approve of in ourselves, should be disapproved of God; we are cast for ever, we belong unto the world, and with the world we shall perish.

It may be said, that if it be so difficult to distinguish between these things, namely, The lawful use of things here below, and their abuse, the allowable industry about them, and the inordinate love of them, on the knowledge whereof our eternal conditions depends, it is impossible but men must spend their time in sollicitous anxiety of mind, as not knowing when they have aright discharged their duty.

*Ans.* (1.) I press these things at present no further, but only to shew how dangerous a thing it is for any to incline in his affections unto the things of this world, wherein an excess is ruinous, and hardly discoverable. Surely, no wise man will venture freely and frequently unto the edge of such a precipice. He will be jealous of his measures, lest they will not hold by the rule of the word. And a due sense hereof is the best preservative of the soul, from cleaving inordinately unto these things below. And when God, in any instance, by afflictions, or otherwise, shews unto believers their transgression herein, and how they have exceeded, Job xxxvi. 8, 9. it makes them careful for the future. They will now or never

never be diligent, that they fall not under that peremptory rule, 1 John ii. 14.

(2.) Where the soul is upright and sincere, there is no need in this case of any more solicitousness or anxiety of mind, than there is unto or about other duties. But when it is biassed and acted by self-love, and its more strong inclinations unto things present, it is impossible men should enjoy solid peace, or be freed from severe reflections on them by their own consciences, in such seasons wherein they are awakened unto their duty, and the consideration of their state; nor have I any thing to tender for their relief. With others it is not so, and therefore I shall so far digress in this place, as to give some directions unto those who in sincerity would be satisfied in this lawful use and enjoyment of earthly things; so as not to adhere unto them with inordinate affections.

1. Remember always that you are not proprietors, nor absolute possessors of these things, but only stewards of them. With respect unto men, you are or may be just proprietors of what you enjoy, with respect unto him who is the great possessor of heaven and earth, you are but stewards. This stewardship we are to give an account of, as we are taught in the parable, Luke xvi. 1, 2. This rule always attended unto, will be a blessed guide in all instances and occasions of duty.

But if a man be left in trust with houses and large possessions, as a steward for the right lord, owner, and proprietor of them, if he fall into a pleasing dream, that they are all his own, and use

them accordingly, it will be a woful surprizal unto him, when he shall be called to account for all he hath received and laid out, whether he will or no. And when indeed he hath nothing to pay. It will scarce be otherwise with them at the great day, who forget the trust which is committed to them, and suppose they may do what they will, with what they call their own.

(2.) There is nothing in the ways of getting, enjoying or using of these things, but giveth its own evidence unto spiritual wisdom, whether it be within the bounds of duty, or no. Men are not lightly deceived herein, but when they are evidently under the power of corrupt affections, or will not at all attend unto themselves, and the language of their own consciences. It is a man's own fault alone, if he know not wherein he doth exceed.

A due examination of ourselves in the sight of God, with respect unto these things, the frame and actings of our minds in them, will greatly give check unto our corrupt inclinations, and discover the folly of those reasonings, whereby we deceive ourselves into the love of earthly things, or justify ourselves therein, and bring to light the secret principle of self-love, which is the root of all this evil.

3. If you would be able to make a right judgment in this case, be sure that you have another object for your affections, which hath a predominant interest in your minds, and which will evidence itself so to have on all occasions. Let a man be never so observant of himself, as unto all out-

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ward duties required of him, with reſpect unto theſe earthly things; let him be liberal in the diſpoſal of them on all occaſions, let him be watchful againſt all intemperance and exceſſes in the uſe of them; yet if he hath not another object for his affections, which hath a prevailing influence upon them, if they are not ſet upon the things that are above, one way or other, it is the world that hath the poſſeſſion of his heart. For the affections of our minds will, and muſt be placed in chief, on things below, or things above; there will be a predominant love in us; and therefore altho' all our actions ſhould teſtify another frame, yet if God, and the things of God be not the principal object of our affections, by one way or other, unto the world we do belong; this is that which is taught us ſo expreſly by our Saviour, Luke xvi. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. 'And I ſay unto 'you, make to yourſelves friends of the Mam'mon of unrighteouſneſs, that when you fail, 'they may receive you into everlaſting habita'tions. He that is faithful in that which is leaſt, 'is faithful alſo in much: And he that is unjuſt 'in the leaſt, is unjuſt alſo in much. If there'fore you have not been faithful in the unrigh'teous Mammon, who will commit to your truſt 'the true riches? And if you have not been 'faithful in that which is another man's, who ſhall 'give you that which is your own? No ſervant 'can ſerve two maſters; for either he will hate 'the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold 'to the one, and deſpiſe the other; ye cannot 'ſerve God and Mammon.'

4. Labour continually for the mortification of your affections unto the things of this world. They are in the state of corrupted nature, set and fixed on them, nor will any reasonings or considerations effectually divert them, or take them off in a due manner, unless they are mortified unto them by the cross of Christ. Whatever change be otherwise wrought in them, it will be of no advantage unto us. It is mortification alone, that will take them off from earthly things unto the glory of God. Hence the apostle having given us that charge, 'Set your affections on things 'above, and not on things below on the earth,' Col. iii. 2. adds this, as the only way and means whereby we may do so, 'Mortify therefore your 'members that are on the earth.' ver. 5. Let no man think that his affections will fall off from earthly things of their own accord. The keenness and sharpness of them, in many things, may be abated by the decay of their natural powers in age, and the like. They may be mated by frequent disappointments, by sicknesses, pains and afflictions, as we shall see immediately; or they may be willing unto a distribution of earthly enjoyments, to have the reputation of it, wherein they still cleave unto the world, but under another shape and appearance. They may be startled by convictions, so as to do many things gladly, that belong unto another frame. But on one pretence or other, under one appearance or other, they will for ever adhere and cleave unto earthly things, unless they are mortified unto them, thro' faith in the blood and cross of Christ, Gal. vi. 14.

Whatever thoughts you may have of your selves in this matter, unless you have the experience of a work of mortification on your affections, you can have no refreshing ground of assurance, that you are in any thing spiritually-minded.

5. In all instances of duty belonging unto your stewardship of earthly things, attend diligently unto the rule of the word. Without this, the grace exhorted unto, may be abused. So of old, under a pretence of a relinquishment of the things of this world, because of the danger in adhering unto them, their own superstition, and the craft of other men prevailed with many, to part with all they had unto the service of others, not better, it may be, not so good as themselves. This evil wholly arose from want of attendance unto the rule of truth, which gives no such direction in ordinary cases. But there is not much seen in these days, of an excess in that kind. But, on the other hand, in all instances of duties of this nature, most mens minds are habitually influenced with pretences, reasonings, and considerations, that turn the scales as unto what they ought to do in proportion in this duty, on the side of the world. If you would be safe, you must in all instances of duty, as in works of charity, piety, and compassion, give authority in and over your souls, unto the rule of the word. Let neither self nor unbelief, nor the custom and example of others be heard to speak; but let the rule alone be attended unto, and to what that speaks, yield obedience.

Unless these things are found in us, none of

us, no man living, if it be not so with him, can have any refreshing evidence or assurance, that he is not under the power of an inordinate, yea, and predominant love unto this world.

And indeed, to add a little further on the occasion of this digression, it is a sad thing to have this exception made against the state of any man, on just grounds; yea, but he loves the world. He is sober and industrious, he is constant in duties of religion, it may be, an earnest preacher of them, a man of sound principles, and blameless as unto the excess of life, but he loves the world. The question is, How doth how this appear? It may be, what you say, is but one of those evil surmises which all things are filled withal. Wherefore, I speak, it not at all to give countenance unto the rash judging of others, which none are more prone unto, than those who one way or other are eminently guilty themselves. But I would have every man judge himself, that we be none of us condemned of the Lord. If notwithstanding the things mentioned, any of us do center in self, which is supplied and filled with the world, if we prefer self above all other things, do aim at the satisfaction of self in what we do well or ill, are useless unto the only good and blessed ends of these earthly things, in supplying the wants of others, according unto the proportions wherewith we are intrusted; it is to be feared, that the world, and the things that are in it, have the principal interest in our affections.

And the danger is yet greater with them who divert on the other extream. Such are they, who

in pride of life, vanity in apparel, excess in drinking, pampering the flesh every day, tread close on the heels of the world, if they do not also fully keep company with it. Altogether in vain is it for such persons to countenance themselves with an appearance of other graces in them, or the sedulous performance of other duties. This one rule will eternally prevail against them; 'If any 'man love the world, the love of the Father is 'not in him.' And by the way, let men take heed how they walk in any instance against the known judgment and practice of the wiser, or more experienced sort of Christians, to their regret and sorrow, if not unto their offence and scandal, or in any way whereunto they win the consent of their own light and conscience, by such reasonings and considerations, as will not hold weight in the ballance of the sanctuary. Yet thus, and no otherwise is it with all them, who under a profession of religion, do indulge unto any excesses wherein they are conformed unto the world.

Fifthly, God makes a hedge against the excess of the affections of men, rational and any way enlightned, unto the things of this world, by suffering the generality of men to carry the use of them, and to be carried by the abuse of them, into actings so filthy, so abominable, so ridiculous as reason itself cannot but abhor. Men by them transform themselves into beasts and monsters, as might be manifested by all sorts of instances; hence the wise man prayed against riches, lest he should not be able to manage the temptations wherewith they are accompanied, Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

Lastly, To close this matter, and to shew us what we are to expect, in case we set our affections on things here below, and they have thereby a predominant interest in our hearts, God hath positively determined and declared, that if it be so, he will have nothing to do with us, nor will accept of those affections which we pretend we can, and do spare for him, and spiritual things. If we abstain from open sins, if we abhor the lewdness and uncleanness of men in the world, if we are constant in religious duties, and give ourselves up to walk after the most strict sort in religion, like Paul in his Pharisaism, may we not, will some say or think, find acceptance with God, tho' our hearts cleave inordinately unto the things of this world? I say, God hath preremptorily determined the contrary; and if other arguments will not prevail with us, he leaves us at last unto this, 'Go, love the world and the things of it, but 'know assuredly that you do it unto the eternal 'loss of your souls,' 1 John ii. 15. Jam. iv. These few instances have I given of the arguments and motives whereby God is pleased to deter us from fixing our affections on things here below. And they are most of them such only, as he maketh use of in the administration of his providence. There are two other heads of things, that offer themselves unto our consideration.

(1.) The ways, means, arguings, and enticements which the world makes use of, to draw, keep, and secure the affections of men unto itself.

(2.) The secret, powerful efficacy of grace, in taking off the heart from these things, turning and

drawing

drawing in unto God, with the arguments and motives that the holy Spirit maketh use of, in and by the word, unto this end; and wherein we must shew what is the act of conquering grace, wherein the heart [illegible] prevailed on, to choose and adhere unto God in love immutable. But these things cannot be handled in any measure, according to their nature and importance, without such length of discourse, as I cannot here divert unto. I shall therefore proceed unto that which is the proper and peculiar subject before us.

## CHAP. XII.

*What is required in, and unto our Affections, that they may be Spiritual. A threefold work on the Affections described.*

TO declare the interest of our affections in this frame of being spiritually-minded, and what they contribute thereunto, I shall do these three things.

First, Declare what is required hereunto, that our affections may be spiritual, wherein lies the foundation of the whole duty.

Secondly, What are their actings when they are so spiritual.

Thirdly, What are the means whereby they may be kept and preserved in that frame, with sundry other things of the like nature. How our affections are concerned in, or do belong unto the frame

frame of mind enquired after, hath been before declared. Without spiritual affections, we cannot be spiritually-minded. And that they may be of this use, three things are required.

First, Their principle.

Secondly, Their object.

Thirdly, The way and manner of their application unto their proper object, by virtue of that principle.

First, As unto the principle acting in them, that our affections may be spiritual, and the spring of our being spiritually-minded, it is required that they be changed, renewed, and in-laid with grace, spiritual and suppernatural. To clear the sense hereof, we must a little consider, what is their state by nature, and then, by what means they may be wrought upon, as unto a change, or a renovation. For they are like unto some things, which in themselves, and their own nature, are poisonous; but being corrected, and receiving a due temperament, from a mixture of other ingredients, become medicinal, and of excellent use.

First, By nature, our affections, all of them are depraved and corrupted. Nothing in the whole nature of man, no power or faculty of the soul is fallen under greater disorder and depravation by the entrance of sin, than our affections are. In and by them is the heart wholly gone and turned off from God, Tit. iii. 3. It were a long work to set forth this depravation of our affections, nor doth it belong unto our present design. Some few things I shall briefly observe concerning it,

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to make way unto what is proposed concerning their change.

1st. This is the only corruption and depravation of our nature, by the fall, evident in and unto reason, or the light of nature itself. Those who were wise among the Heathen, both saw it and complained of it. They found a weakness in the mind, but saw nothing of its darkness and depravation as unto things spiritual. But they were sensible enough of this disorder and tumult of the affections in things moral, which renders the minds of men like a troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. This greatly aggravates the neglect of them who are not sensible of it in themselves, seeing it is discernable in the light of nature.

2dly, They are as depraved, the seat and subject of all lusts, both of the flesh and of the spirit. Yea, lust or evil concupiscence is nothing but the irregular motion and acting of our affections, as depraved, defiled, corrupted, Rom. vii. 9. Hence, no one sin can be mortified without a change wrought in the affections.

3dly, They are the spring, root, and cause of all actual sin in the world, Mat. xv. 9. The evil heart in the scripture, is the corrupt affections of it, with the imaginations of the mind, whereby they are excited and acted, Gen. vi. 5. These are they, which, at this time, fill the whole world with wickedness, darkness, confusion and terror. And we may learn what is their force and efficacy from these effects. So the nature of the plague is most evident, when we see thousands dying of it every week.

4thly, They are the way and means whereby the soul applies itself unto all sinful objects and things. Hence are they called our members, our earthly members; because, as the body applies itself unto its operations by its members, so doth the soul apply itself unto what belongs unto it, by its affections, Rom. vi. 23. Col. iii. 5.

5thly, They will not be under the conduct of the mind, its light, or convictions. Rebellion against the light of the mind, is the very form whereby their corruption acts itself, Job xxiv. 13. Let the apprehensions of the mind, and its notions of good and evil, be what they will, they reject them, and lead the soul in pursuit of their inclinations. Hence, no natural man whatsoever, doth in any measure answer the light of his mind, or the convictions of his understanding; but he sees and approves of better things, following those that are worse. And there is no greater spiritual judgment, than for men to be given up unto themselves, and their own evil affections, Rom. i. 26.

Many other instances might be given of the greatness of that depravation which our affections are fallen under by sin; these may suffice as unto our present purpose.

In general, this depravation of our affections by nature, may be reduced unto two heads.

First, An utter aversation from God and all spiritual things. In this lies the spring of all that dislike of God and his ways, that the hearts of men are filled withal. Yea, they do not only produce an aversation from them, and dislike of

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them, but they fill the mind with an enmity against them. Therefore, 'Men say in their hearts unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways: What is the Almighty that we should serve him? Or what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?' Job xxi. 14, 15. see Rom. i. 28. chap. viii. 7, 8.

Secondly, An inordinate cleaving unto things vain, earthly, and sensual; causing the soul to engage into the pursuit of them, as the horse rushes into the battle.

Whilst our affections are in this state and condition, we are far enough from being spiritually-minded, nor is it possible to engage them into an adherence unto, or delight in spiritual things.

In this state, they may be two ways wrought upon, and yet not so renewed, as to be serviceable unto this end.

1st, There may be various temporary impressions made on them, sometimes there is so by the preaching of the word. Hereon men may hear it with joy, and do many things gladly. Sometimes it is so by judgments, dangers, sicknesses, apprehensions of the approach of death, Psal. lxxviii. 78. xxxv. 37. These things take men off, for a season, from their greedy delight in earthly things, and the pursuit of the interest of lust, in making provision for the flesh. On many other occasions, by great variety of causes, there may be temporary impressions made on the affections that shall seem for a season, to have turned the stream of them. And thereon we have many who every day will be wholly as it were for God,

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resolved to forsake sin, and all the pleasures of it; but the next return unto all their former excesses. For this is the effect of those impressions, that whereas men ordinarily are predominantly acted by love, desire, and delight, which lead them to act according unto the true natural principles of the soul: Now they are for a season acted by fear and dread, which put a kind of force on all their inclinations. Hereon they have other thoughts of good and evil, of things eternal and temporal, of God and their own duty for a season. And hereon, some of them may, and do persuade themselves, that there is a change in their hearts and affections, which there is not; like a man who persuades himself that he hath lost his ague, because his present fit is over. The next trial of temptation carries them away again unto the world and sin.

There are sometimes sudden impressions made on spiritual affections, which are always of great advantage to the soul, renewing its engagements unto God and duty. So was it with Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 17, 18, 19, 20. So is it often with believers in hearing the word, and other occasions. On all of them they renew their cleavings unto God with love and delight. But the effect of these impressions on unrenewed affections, are neither spiritual nor durable. Yea, for the most part, they are but checks given in the providence of God, unto the raging of their lusts, Psal. xi. 28.

2dly, They are liable unto an habitual change. This the experience of all ages gives testimony unto. There may be an habitual change wrought

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in the passions and affections of the mind, as unto the inordinate and violent pursuit of their inclinations, without any gracious renovation of them. Education, philosophy, or reason, long afflictions, spiritual light, and gifts, have wrought this change. So Saul upon his call to be king, became another man. Hereby, persons naturally passionate and furious have been made sedate and moderate; and those who have been sensual, have become temperate; yea, and haters of religion, to be professors of it. All these things, and many more of the like nature, have proceeded from a change wrought upon the affections only; whilst the mind, will, and conscience, have been totally unsanctified.

By this change, where it is alone, no man ever became spiritually-minded. For whereas there are two parts of the depravation of our affections, that whereby they are turned off from God, and that whereby they inordinately cleave unto other things; their change principally, if not only, respects the latter. They are brought into some order with respect unto present things. The mind is not continually tossed up and down by them, as the waves of the sea, that are troubled and cast up mire and dirt. They do not carry those in whom they are into vitious sensual actions, but they allow them to make virtue in moderation, sobriety, temperance, fidelity, and usefulness in several ways, to be their design. And it is admirable to think, what degrees of eminency in all sorts of moral virtues, upon this one principle of moderating the affections, even many among the Hea-

Heathens attained unto. But as unto their aversation from God and spiritual things, in the true spiritual notion of them, they are not cured by this change. At least, this change may be, and yet this latter not be wrought.

Again, This alteration doth but turn the course or stream of mens affections, it doth not change the nature of them. They are the same in their spring and fountain, as ever they were, only they are habituated unto another course than what of themselves they are inclined unto. You may take a young whelp of the most fierce and savage creatures, as of a tyger, or a wolf, and by custom or usage, make it as tame and harmless as any domestic creature, a dog or the like. But altho' it may be turned unto quite another way or course of acting, than what it was of itself inclined unto, yet its nature is not changed. And therefore, frequently on occasion, opportunity, or provocation, it will fall into its own savage inclination. And having tasted of the blood of creatures, it will never be reclaimed. So is it with the depraved affections of men with respect unto their change; their streams are turned, they are habituated unto a new course, their nature is not altered, at least not from rational unto spiritual, from earthly unto heavenly. Yet this is that which was most beautiful and desirable in nature, the glory of it, and the utmost of its attainments. He who has, by any means, proceeded unto such a moderation of his affections, as to render him kind, benign, patient, useful, preferring public good before private, moderate, and temperate in all things, will

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rise up in judgment against those, who professing themselves to be under the conduct of the light of grace, do yet by being morose, angry, selfish, worldly, manifest that their affections are not subdued by the power of that grace. Wherefore, that we may be spiritually-minded, there is yet another work upon our affections required, which is their internal renovation, whereby not only the course of their actings is changed, but their nature is altered, and spiritually renewed. I intend that which is expressed in that great evangelical promise, Isa. xvi. 6, 7, 8, 9. 'The wolf 'shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall ly 'down with the kid, and the calf and the young 'lion and the fatling together, and a little child 'shall lead them, and the cow and the bear shall 'feed, their young ones shall ly down together, 'and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the 'sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, 'and the weaned child shall put his hand on the 'cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor de-'stroy in all my holy mountain.' A change and alteration is promised in the natures, principles, and first inclinations of the worst and most savage sinners, who pass under the power of gospel-grace.

This is that which is required of us in a way of duty, Ephes. iv. 13. 'And be ye renewed in the 'spirit of your minds.' There is a renovation of the mind itself, by the communication of spiritual saving light and understanding thereunto, whereof I have treated elsewhere at large, see Rom. xii. 2. Ephes. i. 17, 18. But the spirit of the mind, that whereby it is enlivened, lead and disposed un-

to its actings, that is to be renewed also. The spirit of the mind is, in this place, opposed unto the old man, which is corrupt, according to deceitful lust, or depraved affections, ver. 22. These therefore are that spirit of the mind which incline, bend, and lead it to act suitably unto its inclinations, which is to berenewd. And when our affections are inclined by the saving grace of the holy Spirit, then are they renewed, and not else. No other change will give them a spiritual renovation. Hereby those things which are only natural affections in themselves, in them that believe, become fruits of the Spirit. Gal. v. 22. 'The 'fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,' &c. They continue the same as they were in their essence, substance, and natural powers, but are changed in their properties, qualities, inclinations, whenever a new nature is given unto them. So the waters at Marah were the same waters still, before and after their cure. But of themselves, and in their nature, they were bitter, so as that the people could not drink them; in the casting of a tree into them, they were made sweet and useful, Exod. xv. 25, 26. So was it with the waters of Jericho, which were cured by casting salt into them, 2 Kings ii. 20, 21. Our affections continue the same as they were in their nature and essence, but they are so cured by grace, as that their properties, qualities, and inclinations are all cleansed or renewed. The tree or salt that is cast into these waters, whereby the cure is wrought, is the love of God above all, proceeding from faith in him by Christ Jesus.

## CHAP. XIII.

*The Work of the Renovation of our Affections. How differenced from any other Impression on, or Change wrought in them, and how it is evidenced so to be. The first Instance in the Universality accompanying of Affections Spiritually renewed. The order of the Exercise of our Affections with Respect unto their object.*

THat which is our concernment herein, is to enquire of what nature that work is which hath been on our own affections, or in them, and how it differs from those, which whatever they do or effect, yet will not render us nor themselves spiritual.

And we ought to use the best of our diligence herein; because the great means whereby multitudes delude and deceive their own souls, persuading themselves that there has been an effectual work of the grace of the gospel in them, is the change that they find in their affections, which may be, on many occasions, without any spiritual renovation.

First, As unto the temporary and occasional impressions in the affections before-mentioned, whether from the word, or any other divine warning by afflictions or mercies, they are common to all sorts of persons. Some there are, whose 'consciences are seared with a hot iron,' 1 Tim. vi.

2. who thereon being paſt feeling (ſenſleſs of all calls, warnings and rebukes,) 'do give themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs,' Eph. iv. 19. Such perſons having hardened themſelves in a long courſe of ſin, and being given up unto a reprobate mind, or vile affections in a way of judgment, have, it may be, no ſuch impreſſions on their affections on any occaſion, as to move them with a ſenſe of things ſpiritual and eternal. They may be terrified with dangers, ſudden judgments, and other revelations of the wrath of God from heaven againſt the ungodlineſs of men; but they are not drawn to take ſhelter in thoughts of ſpiritual things. Nothing but hell will awaken them unto a due conſideration of themſelves and things eternal.

It is otherwiſe with the generality of men who are not profligate and impudent in ſinning. For, altho' they are in a natural condition, and a courſe of ſin, in the neglect of known duties, yet, by one means or other, moſt frequently by the preaching of the word, their affections are ſtirred towards heavenly things.

Sometimes they are afraid, ſometimes they have hopes and deſires about them. Theſe put them on reſolutions, and ſome temporary endeavours to change their lives, to abſtain from ſin, and to perform holy duties. But as the prophet complains, 'Their goodneſs is as the morning cloud, and as the early dew, ſo paſſeth it away.' Yet by means hereof, do many poor ignorant ſouls deceive themſelves, and cry, Peace, Peace, when there

there is no peace. And they will ſometimes ſo expreſs how they are affected with complaints of themſelves as unto their long neglect of ſpiritual things, that others may entertain good hopes concerning them; but all comes to nothing in the trial.

There is no difficulty unto ſpiritual light, to diſtinguiſh between theſe occaſional impreſſions on the affections, and that ſpiritual renovation of them which we enquire after. This alone is ſufficient to do it, that they are all of them temporary and evanid. They abide for a while only, as our Saviour ſpeaks, and every occaſions defeats all their efficacy. They may be frequently renewed, but they never abide. Some of them immediately paſs away, and are utterly loſt between the place where they hear the word and their own habitations; and in vain ſhall they inquire after them again, they are gone for ever. Some have a larger continuance, endure longer in the mind, and produce ſome outward effects: None of them will hold any trial, or ſhock of temptation.

Yet I have ſomewhat to ſay unto thoſe who have ſuch impreſſions on their affections, and warning by them.

(1.) Deſpiſe them not, for God is in them. Although he may not be in them in a way of ſaving grace, yet he is in them in that which may be preparatory thereto. They are not common human accidents, but eſpecial divine warnings.

(2.) Labour to retain them, or a ſenſe of them, upon your hearts and conſciences. You have got nothing by loſing ſo many of them already. And

if you proceed in their neglect, after a while you will hear of them no more.

(3.) Put no more in them than belongs unto them. Do not presently conclude that your ſtate is good, becauſe you have been affected at the hearing of the word, or under a ſickneſs, or in a a danger. Hereon many think that now all is well with them, wherewith they pleaſe themſelves, until they are wholly immerſed in their former ſecurity.

Secondly, We may conſider the difference that is between the habitual change of the affections before deſcribed, and that renovation by grace which renders them ſpiritual. And this is of great concernment unto us all to inquire into it with diligence. Multitudes are herein deceived, and that unto their ruin. For they reſolve their preſent peace into, and build their hopes of eternal life on ſuch a change in themſelves, as will not abide the trial. This difference therefore is to be examined by ſcripture light, and the experience of them that do believe. And,

1. There is a double univerſality with reſpect unto the ſpiritual renovation of our affections.

(1.) That which is ſubjective, with reſpect unto the affections themſelves. And,

(2.) That which is objective, with reſpect unto ſpiritual things.

Firſt, Sanctification extends itſelf unto the whole ſpirit, ſoul and body, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. When we ſay that we are ſanctified in part only, we do not ſay that any part, power or faculty of the ſoul is unſanctified, but only that the work

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is not absolutely perfect in any of them. All sin may retain power in some one affection, as anger, fear, or love, as unto actual irruptions and effects more than in all the rest. As one affection may be more eminently sanctified in some than in others. For, it may have advantages unto this end, from mens natural tempers, and various outward circumstances. Hence some find little difficulty in the mortification of all other lusts or corruptions in comparison of what they meet withal in some one inordinate affection or corruption. This it may be David had regard unto, Psal. xviii. 23. I have known persons shining examplarily in all other graces, who have been scarce free from giving great scandal by the excess of their passions, and easy provocations thereunto. And yet they have known that the setting themselves unto the sincere vigorous mortification of that disorder, is the most eminent pledge of their sincerity in other things. For the trial of our self-denial lies in the things that our natural inclinations ly strongest towards. Howbeit, as was said, there is no affection where there is this work of renovation, but it is sanctified and renewed; none of them is left absolutely unto the service of sin and Satan. And therefore, whereas by reason of the advantages mentioned, sin doth greatly contend to use some of them unto its interest and service in a peculiar manner, yet are they inabled unto, and made meet for gracious actings, and do in their proper seasons, put forth themselves accordingly. There is no affection of the mind from whence the soul and conscience hath received the greatest da-

mage, that was, as it were, the field wherein the contest is managed between sin and grace, but hath its spiritual use and exercise, when the mind is renewed.

There are some so inordinately subject to anger and passion therein, as if they were absolutely under the power and dominion of it; yet do they also know how to be angry, and sin not in being angry at sin in themselves and others. 'Yea, 'what indignation, yea, what revenge,' 2 Cor. vii. 7. Yea, God is pleased sometimes to leave somewhat more than ordinary of the power of corruption in one affection, that it may be an occasion of the continual exercise of grace in the other affections. Yet they are all sanctified in their degree, that which is relieved as well as that which doth relieve. And therefore as the remainder of sin in them that believe is called the old man, which is to be crucified in all the members of it, because of its adherence unto the whole person in all its powers and faculties: So the grace implanted in our natures, is called the new man, there being nothing in us that is not seasoned and affected with it. As nothing in our natures escaped the taint of sin, so nothing in our natures is accepted from the renovation that is by grace. He in whom any one affection is utterly unrenewed, hath no one graciously renewed in him. Let men take heed how they indulge to any depraved affection, for it will be an unvoidable impeachment of their sincerity. Think not to say with Naaman 'God be merciful unto me in this 'thing, in all others I will be for him.'

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He requires the whole heart, and will have it or none. The chief work of a Christian is to make all his affections in all their operations subservient unto the life of God, Rom. vi. 17. And he who is wise will keep a continual watch over those wherein he finds the greatest reluctancy thereunto. And every affection is originally sanctified according unto the use it is to be of, in the life of holiness and obedience.

To be intire for God, to follow him wholly, to cleave unto him with purpose of heart, to have the heart circumcised to love him, is to have all our affections renewed and sanctified, without which we can do none of them. When it is otherwise, there is a double heart, an heart and a heart, which he abhors, 'Their heart is divided, now shall 'they be found faulty,' Hos. x. 2.

So it is in the other change mentioned. Whatever is or may be wrought upon our affections when they are not spiritually renewed: That very change as unto the degree of it, is not universal; it doth not affect the whole mind in all its powers and affections, until a vital prevailing principle and habit of grace is implanted in the soul; sin will not only radically adhere unto all the faculties, powers and affections, but will under any change that may befal them, refer the rule and dominion in some of them unto itself. So was it with the young man that came unto our Lord Jesus Christ, to know what he should do to obtain eternal life, Mark x. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.

Thus there are many who, in other things, are re-

reduced unto moderation, ſobriety and temperance, yet there remaineth in them the love of money in a predominant degree, which to them is the root of all evil, as the apoſtle ſpeaks, ſome ſeem to be religious, but they bridle not their tongues thro' anger, envy, hatred, and the like, their religion is in vain.

The moſt of men in their ſeveral ways of profeſſion, pretend not only unto religion, but zeal in it, yet ſet no bounds unto their affections unto earthly enjoyments. Some of old who had moſt eminently in all other things ſubdued their paſſions and affections, were the greateſt enemies unto, and perſecutors of the goſpel.

Some who ſeem to have had a mighty change wrought in them by a ſuperſtitious devotion, do yet walk in the ſpirit of Cain towards all the diſciples of Chriſt, as it is with the principal devotioniſts in the church of Rome; and elſewhere we may ſee ſome go ſoberly about the perſecution and deſtruction of other Chriſtians. Some will cheriſh one ſecret luſt or other, which they cannot but know to be pernicious unto their ſouls. Some love the praiſe of men, which will never permit them to be truly ſpiritually-minded; ſo our Saviour teſtifieth of ſome, that they could not believe, becauſe they loved the praiſe of men. This was the known vice of all the ancient philoſophers. They had many of them, on the principles of reaſon, and by ſevere exerciſe, ſubdued their affections unto great moderation about temporary things. But, in the mean time, were all of them ſlaves to vain glory, and the praiſe of men, un-

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til by the public obſervation of it, and ſome contradictions in their lives unto their pretences unto virtue, they loſt that alſo among wiſe and conſiderate men. And generally if men, not ſpiritually renewed, were able to ſearch themſelves, they would find that ſome of their affections are ſo far from having any change wrought in them, as that they are a quiet habitation for ſin, where it exerciſeth its rule and dominion.

Secondly, There is an univerſality that is objective in ſpiritual things, with reſpect unto the renovation of our affections, that is, affections ſpiritually renewed do fix themſelves upon, and cleave unto all ſpiritual things in their proper places, and unto their proper ends. For the ground and reaſon of our adherence unto any one of them, are the ſame with reſpect unto them all. That is their relation unto God in Chriſt. Wherefore, when our affections are renewed, we make no choice in ſpiritual things, cleaving unto ſome and refuſing others, making uſe of Naaman's reſtraint, but our adherence is the ſame unto them all in their proper places and degrees. And, if by reaſon of darkneſs and ignorance, we know not any of them to be from God, as for inſtance, the obſervation of the Lord's day, it is of unſpeakable diſadvantage unto us. An equal reſpect is required in us unto all God's commands. Yet there are various diſtinctions in ſpiritual things. And thereon a man may, and ought to value one above another, as unto the degrees of his love and eſteem, altho' they are to be ſincere with reſpect unto them all.

1st, God himself, that is, as revealed in and by Christ, is in the first and chiefest place the proper and adequate object of our affections, as they are renewed. He is so for himself, or his own sake alone. This is the spring, the center, and chief object of our love. He that loves not God for himself, that is, for what he is in himself, and what from himself alone, he is, and will be unto us in Christ, which considerations are inseparable, he hath no true affection for any spiritual thing whatever. And not a few do here deceive themselves, or are deceived which should make us the more strict and diligent in the examination of ourselves. They suppose that they love heaven and heavenly things, and the duties of divine worship, which persuasion may befal them on many grounds and occasions, which will not endure the trial. But as unto God himself, they can give no evidence that they have any love to him, either on the account of the glorious excellencies of his nature, with their natural relation unto him, and dependance on him, nor on the account of the manifestation of himself in Christ, and the exercise of his grace therein. But whatever be pretended, there is no love unto God, whereof these things are not the formal reason, that proceed not from these springs. And because that all men pretend that they love God, and defy them that think them so vile as not so to do, tho' they live in open enmity against him, and hatred of him, it becomes us strictly to examine ourselves on what grounds we pretend so to do. Is it because we see an excellency, a beauty, a desirableness in the glorious properties of his na-

nature, ſuch as our ſouls are refreſhed and ſatisfied with the thoughts of by faith, and in whoſe enjoyment our bleſſedneſs will conſiſt, ſo that we always rejoice at the remembrance of his holineſs? Is it our great joy and ſatisfaction that God is what he is? Is it from the glorious manfeſtation that he hath made of himſelf, and all his holy excellencies in Chriſt, with the communication of himſelf unto us in and by him? If it be ſo indeed, then is our love generous and gracious, from the renovation of our affections. But if we ſay we love God, yet truly know not why, or upon principles of education, and becauſe it is eſteemed the height of wickedneſs to do otherwiſe, we ſhall be at a loſs when we are called unto our trial. This is the firſt object of our affections.

2dly, In other ſpiritual things, renewed affections do cleave unto them according as God is in them. God alone is loved for himſelf, all other things for him, in the meaſure and degree of his preſence in them. This alone gives them preeminence in renewed affections; for inſtance, God is in Chriſt, in the human nature of the man Chriſt Jeſus, in a way and manner, ſingular, in concern a like, incomprehenſible, as he is in the ſame kind in nothing elſe. Therefore is the Lord Chriſt even as unto his human nature, the object of our love and affections, in ſuch a way and degree, as no other things, ſpiritual or eternal, but God himſelf is, or ought to be; all other ſpiritual things become ſo from the preſence of God in them, and from the degree of that preſence have they their nature and uſe. Accordingly

ingly are they, or ought to be the object of our affections, as unto the degree of their exercise. Evidence of the presence of God in things and persons, are the only attractives of renewed affections.

3dly, In those things which seem to stand in an equality as unto what is of God in them, yet on some special occasions and reasons, our love may go forth eminently unto one more than another. Some particular truth, with the grace communicated by it, may have been the means of our conversion unto God, of our edification in an especial manner, of our consolation in distress; it cannot be, but that the mind will have a peculiar respect unto, and valuation of such truths, and the grace administred by them. And so it is as unto duties. We may have found such a lively intercourse and communion with God in some of them, as may give us a peculiar delight in them.

But notwithstanding these differences, affections spiritually renewed, do cleave unto all spiritual things, as such. For the true formal reason of their so doing, is the same in them all, namely, God in them; only they have several ways of acting themselves towards them, whereof I shall give one instance.

Our Saviour distributes spiritual things into those that are heavenly, and those that earthly, that is comparatively so, John iii. 12. 'If I have 'told you earthly things, and you believe not; 'how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly 'things.'

The heavenly things, are the deep and mysteri-

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ous councils of the will of God. These renewed affections cleave unto with holy admiration and satisfactory submission, captivating the understanding unto what it cannot comprehend. So the apostle declares it, Rom. xi. 33, 34, 35, 36. 'O 'the depth of the riches both of the wisdon and 'knowledge of God! How unsearchable are 'his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 'For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or 'who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath 'first given to him, and it shall be recompensed 'to him again? For of him, and thro' him, and 'to him are all things, to whom be glory for e'ver, Amen.' What the mind cannot comprehend, the heart doth admire and adore, delighting in God, and giving glory unto him in all.

The earthly things intended by our Saviour in that place, is the work of God upon the souls of men in their regeneration, wrought here in the the earth. Towards these the affections act themselves with delight, and with great thanksgiving. The experience of the grace of God in and upon believers is sweet unto their souls. But, one way or other they cleave unto them all, they have not a prevailing aversation unto any of them. They have a regard unto all God's precepts, a delight in all his councils, a love to himself and all his ways.

Whatever other change is wrought on the affections, if they be not spiritually renewed, it is not so with them. For as they do not cleave unto any spiritual things, in their own true proper nature, in a due manner because of the evidences of the

the presence of God in them, so there are always some of them, whereunto those whose affections are not renewed, do maintain an aversation and an enmity. And altho' this frame doth not instantly discover itself, yet it will do so upon any especial trial. So was it with the hearers of our Saviour, John vi. There was a great impression made on their affections, by what he taught them concerning the bread of God, that came down from heaven, and gave life unto the world. For they cried thereon, 'Lord evermore give us this bread,' ver. 34. But when the mystery of it was further explained unto them, they liked it not, but cried, 'This is a hard saying, who can bear it,' ver. 60; and thereon fell off both from him and his doctrine, altho' they had followed him so long as to be esteemed his disciples, ver. 66.

I say therefore whensoever mens affections are not renewed, whatever other change may have been wrought upon them, as they have no true delight in any spiritual things, or truths, for themselves and in their own nature, so there are some instances, wherein they will maintain their natural enmity and aversation unto them. This is the first difference between affections spiritually renewed, and those which from any other causes may have some kind of change wrought in them.

## CHAP. XIV.

*The second Difference between Affections spiritually renewed, and those who have been only changed by Light and Conviction. Grounds and Reasons of Mens Delight in Duties of Divine Worship, and of their Diligence in their Performance whose Minds are not Spiritually-minded.*

THE second difference lieth herein, " That " there may be a change in the affections, " wherein men may have delight in the duties of " religious worship, and diligence in their obser- " vance; but it is the spiritual renovation of the " affections that gives delight in God thro' Christ, " in any duty of religious worship whatever."

Where the truth of the gospel is known and publickly professed; there is great variety in the minds, ways, and practices of men about the duties of religious worship. Many are profane in their minds and lives, who, practically at least, despise, or wholly neglect the observance of them. These are stout-hearted, and far from righteousness, Tit. i. 16. Some attend unto them formally and cursorily, from the principles of their education, and it may be out of some convictions they have of their necessity. But many there are who in the way they choose and are pleased withal, are diligent in their observance, and that with

great delight, who yet give no evidence of the ſpiritual renovation of their minds. Yea, the way whereby ſome expreſs their devotion in them, being ſuperſtitious and idolatrous, is inconſiſtent with that or any other ſaving grace. This therefore we muſt diligently enquire into, or ſearch into the grounds and reaſons of mens delight in divine worſhip, according unto their convictions of the way of it, and yet continue in their minds altogether unrenewed. And,

Firſt, Men may be greatly affected with the outward part of divine worſhip, and the manner of the performance thereof, who have no delight in what is internal, real, and ſpiritual therein, John v. 35. 'He was a burning and a ſhining 'light; and ye were willing for a ſeaſon to re- 'joice in this light.' So, many were delighted in the preaching of Ezekiel becauſe of his eloquence and elegancy of his parables, chap. xxxiii. 31, 32. This gave them both delight and diligence in hearing, whereon they call themſelves the people of God, tho' they continued to live in ſin; 'their hearts went after covetouſneſs.' The ſame may befal many at preſent, with reference unto the ſpiritual gifts of thoſe by whom the word is diſpenſed. I deny not but that men may be more delighted, more ſatisfied with the gifts, the preaching of one than another, and yet be ſincere in their delight in the diſpenſation of the word; for they may find more ſpiritual advantage thereby, than by the gifts of others, and things ſo prepared as to be ſuited unto their edification more than elſewhere. But that which at preſent

we insist on, hath respect only unto some outward circumstances pleasing the minds of men, 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4.

This was principally evident under the old testament, whilst they had carnal ordinances and a worldly sanctuary. Oft-times under that dispensation the people were given up unto all sorts of idolatry and superstition. And when they were not so, yet were the body of them carnal and unholy, as is evident from the whole tract of God's dealings with them by his prophets, and in his providences. Yet had they great delight in the outward solemnities of their worship, placing all their trust of acceptance with God therein. They who did truly and really believe, looked through them all unto Christ, whom they did foresignify; without which, the things were a yoke unto them, and a burthen almost insupportable, Acts xv. But those who were carnal, delighted in the things themselves, and for their sakes rejected him who was the life and substance of them all. And this proved the great means of the apostacy of the Christian church also. For to maintain some appearance of spiritual affections, men introduced carnal incitations of them, into evangelical worship; such as singing with musick, and pompous ceremonies. For they find such things needful to reconcile the worship of God unto their minds and affections; and thro' them they appear to have great delight therein. Could some men but in their thoughts separate divine service, from that outward order, those methods of variety, shew, and melody, wherewith they are affected,

they would have no delight in it, but look upon it as a thing that must be endured. How can it be otherwise conceived of among the Papists: They will, with much earnestness, many evidences of devotion, sometimes with difficulty and danger, repair unto their solemn worship; and yet when they are present, understand not one word whereby their minds might be excited unto the real actings of faith, love, and delight in God. Only order, ceremony, musick, and other incentives of carnal affections, make great impression on them. Affections spiritually renewed are not concerned in these things. Yea, if those in whom they are, should be engaged in the use of them they would find them means of diverting their minds from the proper work of divine worship, rather than an advantage therein. It will appear so unto themselves, unless they are content to lose their spiritual affections, acting themselves in faith and love, embracing in their stead a carnal imaginary devotion. Hence, two persons may, at the same time, attend unto the same ordinances of divine worship, with equal delight, on very distinct principles; as if two men should come into the same garden planted and adorned with all variety of herbs and flowers; one ignorant of the nature of them, the other a skilful Herbalist. Both may be equally delighted, the one with the colours and smell of the flowers, the other with the consideration of their various natures, their uses in physical remedies, or the like. So it may be in the hearing of the word. For instance, one may be delighted with the outward administrati-

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on, another with its spiritual efficacy at the same time. Hence Austin tells us, that singing in the church was laid aside by Athanasius at Alexandria; not the peoples singing of psalms, but a kind of singing in the reading of the scripture, and some offices of worship, which began then to be introduced in the church. And the reason he gave why he did it was, that the modulation of the voice and musical tune, might not divert the minds of men from that spiritual affection which is required of them in sacred duties. What there is of real order in the worship of God, as there is that order which is an effect of divine wisdom, it is suited and useful unto spiritual affections, because proceeding from the same Spirit, whereby they are internally renewed. 'Beholding your 'order,' Col. ii. 5. Every thing of God's appointment is both helpful and delightful unto them. None can say with higher raptures of admiration, 'How amiable are thy tabernacles O Lord!' Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2. than they whose affections are renewed. Yet is not their delight terminated on them, as we shall see immediately.

Secondly, Men may be delighted in the performance of outward duties of divine worship, because in them they comply with, and give some kind of satisfaction unto their convictions. When conscience is awakened unto a sense of the necessity of such duties, namely, Of those wherein divine worship doth consist, it will give the mind no rest or peace in the neglect of them. Let them be attended unto in the seasons which light, conviction, and custom call for, it will be so far satis-

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fied, as that the mind ſhall find preſent eaſe and refreſhment in it. And when the ſoul is wonted unto this relief, it will not only be diligent in the performance of ſuch duties, it will not only not omit them, but it will delight in them, as thoſe which bring them in great advantage. Hence many will not omit the duty of prayer every morning, who upon the matter are reſolved to live in ſin all the day long. And there are but few who ſedulouſly endeavour to live and walk in the frame of their hearts and ways anſwerable unto their own prayers; yet, all that is in our prayers beyond our endeavours to anſwer it, in a conformity of heart and life, is but the exerciſe of gifts in anſwer to convictions. Others find them an allay of troubles in them, like that which ſick perſons may find by drinking cold water in a fever, whoſe flames are aſſuaged for a ſeaſon by it. They make them as an antidote againſt the poiſon and ſting of ſin, which allayeth its rage, but cannot expel its venom.

Or theſe duties are unto them, like the ſacrifices for ſin under the law. They gave a guilty perſon preſent eaſe. But as the apoſtle ſpeaks, they made not men perfect. They took not away utterly a conſcience condemning for ſin. Preſently on the firſt omiſſion of duty, a ſenſe of ſin again returned on them, and that not only as the fact, but as the perſon himſelf was condemned by the law. Then were the ſacrifices to be repeated for a renewed propitiation. This gave that carnal people ſuch delight and ſatisfaction in thoſe ſacrifices, that they truſted unto them for

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righteouſneſs, life, and ſalvation. So it is with perſons who are conſtant in ſpiritual duties mere-ly from conviction. The performance of thoſe duties gives them a preſent relief and eaſe, tho' it heal not their wound, it aſſuageth their pain, and diſpelleth their preſent fears. Hence are they frequent in them, and that oft-times, not without delight; becauſe they find eaſe thereby. And their condition is ſomewhat dangerous, who, upon the ſenſe of the guilt of any ſin, do betake themſelves for relief unto their prayers; which having diſcharged, they are much at eaſe in their minds and conſciences, altho' they have obtained no real ſenſe of the pardon of ſin, nor any ſtrength againſt it.

It will be ſaid, Do not all men, the beſt of men, perform all ſpiritual duties out of a conviction of their neceſſity? Do they not know it would be their ſin to omit them, and ſo find ſatisfaction in their minds upon their performance? I ſay they do; but it is one thing to perform a duty out of conviction of a neceſſity, as it is God's ordinance, which conviction reſpects only the duty itſelf; another thing to perform it, to give ſatisfaction unto convictions of other ſins, or to quiet conſcience under its trouble about them, which latter we ſpeak unto. This begins and ends in ſelf, ſelf-ſatisfaction is the ſole deſign of it. By it men aim at ſome reſt and quietneſs in their own minds, which otherwiſe they cannot attain. But in the performance of duties in faith, from a conviction of their neceſſity as God's ordinance, and their uſe in the way of his grace, the ſoul be-

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gins and ends in God. It ſeeks no ſatiſfaction in them, nor finds it from them, but in and from God alone by them.

Thirdly, The principal reaſon why men whoſe affections are only changed, not ſpiritually renewed do delight in holy duties of divine worſhip, is, becauſe they place their righteouſneſs before God in them, whereon they hope to be accepted with him. They know not, they ſeek not after any other righteouſneſs, but what is of their own working out. Whatever notions they may have of the righteouſneſs of faith, of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, that which they practically truſt unto, is their own; and it diſcovers itſelf ſo to be in their own conſciences on every trial that befals them. Yea, when they cry unto the Lord, and pretend unto faith in Chriſt, they quickly make it evident that their principal truſt is reſolved into themſelves. Now in all that they can plead in a way of duties or obedience, nothing carrieth a fairer pretence unto a righteouſneſs, than what they do in the worſhip of God, and the exerciſe of the acts of religion towards him. This is that which he expects at their hand, what is due unto him, in the light of their conſciences; the beſt that they can do to pleaſe him, which therefore they muſt put their truſt in, or nothing. They ſecretly ſuppoſe not only that there is a righteouſneſs in theſe things which will anſwer for itſelf, but ſuch alſo as will make compenſation in ſome meaſure for their ſins; and therefore, whereas they cannot but frequently fall into ſin, they relieve themſelves from the reflection of their con-

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sciences by a multiplication of duties, and renewed diligence in them.

It is inconceivable what delight and satisfaction men will take in any thing that seems to contribute so much unto a righteousness of their own. For it is suitable unto, and pleaseth all the principles of nature as corrupt, after it is brought under the power of a conviction concerning sin, righteousness and judgment.

This made the Jews of old so pertinaciously adhere unto the ceremonies and sacrifices of the law, and to prefer them above the gospel, the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, Rom. x. 3, 4. They looked and sought for righteousness by them. Those who for many generations were kept up with great difficulty unto any tolerable observance of them, when they had learned to place all their hopes of a righteousness in them, would, and did adhere unto them, unto their temporal and eternal ruin, Rom. ix. 31, 32, 33. And when men were persuaded that righteousness was to be attained by works of munificence and supposed charity, in the dedication of their substance unto the use of the church; they who otherwise were covetous, and greedy, and oppressing, would lavish gold out of the bag, and give up their whole patrimony, with all their ill gotten goods to attain it, so powerful an influence hath the desire of self-righteousness upon the minds of men. It is the best fortification of the soul against Christ and the gospel, the last reserve whereby it maintains the interest of self against the grace of God.

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Hence I say, those that place their righteousness, or that which is the principal part of it, in the duties of religious worship, will not only be diligent in them, but oft-times abound in a multiplication of them. Especially will they do so, if they may be performed in such a way and manner, as pleaseth their affections with a shew of humility and devotion, requiring nothing of the exercise of faith, or sincere divine love therein. So is it with many in all kinds of religion, whether the way of their worship be true or false, whether it be appointed by God, or rejected by him. And the declaration hereof is the subject of the discourse of the prophet, Isa. i, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. Also, Mic. vi. 7, 8.

Fourthly, The reputation of devotion in religious duties, may insensibly affect the unrenewed minds of men with great diligence and delight in their performance. However men are divided in their apprehension and practice about religion; however different from, and contrary unto each other, their ways of divine worship are: Yet it is amongst all sorts of men, yea, in the secret thoughts of them who outwardly contemn these things, a matter of reputation to be devout, to be diligent, to be strict in and about those duties of religion, which, according to their own light and persuasion, they judge incumbent on them. This greatly affects the minds of men, whilst pride is secretly predominant in them, and they love the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Especially, will this consideration prevail on them, when they suppose that the credit and honour

nour of the way which they profess, in comparation with others, depends much on their reputation as to their strictness in duties of devotion. For then, will they not only be diligent in themselves but zealous in drawing others unto the same observances. These two principles, their own reputation, and that of their sect, constituted the life and soul of Pharisaism of old. According as the minds of men are influenced with these apprehensions, so will a love unto, and a delight in those duties whereby their reputation is attained, thrive and grow in them.

I am far from apprehending that any men are, (at least I speak not of them who are) such vile Hypocrites, as to do all that they do in religion to be seen and praised of men, being influenced in all public duties thereby, which some among the Pharisees were given up unto. But I speak of them who being under the convictions and motives before-mentioned, do also yet give admittance unto this corrupt end of desire of reputation, or the praise of men. For every such end being admitted and prevalent in the mind, will universally influence the affections unto a delight in those duties, whereby that end may be attained, until the person with whom it is so, be habituated unto them with great satisfaction.

Fifthly, I should in the last place insist on superstition. As this is an undue fear of the divine nature, will, and operations, built on false notions and apprehensions of them, it may befal the minds of men in all religions, true and false. It is an internal vice of the mind. As it respects the out-

outward way and means of religious service, and consists in the devout performance of such duties, as God indeed accepts not, but forbids; so it belongs only to religion as it is false and corrupt. How, in both respects, it will engage the minds of men unto the performance of religious duties; and for the most part, with the most scrupulous diligence, and sometimes with prodigious attempts to exceed the measures of human nature in what they do design, is too long a work here to be declared. It may suffice to have mentioned it among the causes and reasons why men whose affections are not spiritually renewed, may yet greatly delight in the diligent performance of the outward duties of religion. Our design in these things is the discovery of the true nature of this grace and duty of being spiritually-minded. Hereunto we have declared that it is necessary that our affections be spiritually, and supernaturally renewed. And because there may be a great change wrought on the affections of men, with respect unto spiritual things, where there is nothing of this supernatural renovation; our present enquiry is, What are the differences that are between the actings of the affections, of the one sort and of the other; whether spiritually renewed, or occasionally changed? And wherein the great exercise of them consists in the duties of religious worship? I have declared what are the grounds and reasons, whence men of unrenewed minds do delight oft-times in the duties of divine worship, and are diligent in the performance of them.

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From these, and the like considerations, it may be made manifest, that the greatest part of the devotion that is in the world, doth not spring from the spiritual renovation of the minds of men, without which it is not accepted with God. That which remains to give in instance, farther evidence unto the discovery we are in the pursuit of, is, what are the grounds and reasons whereon those whose minds and affections are spiritually renewed do delight in the institutions of divine worship; and attend unto their observance with great heed and diligence? And because this is an enquiry of great importance, and is of great use to be stated in other cases, as well as that before us; I shall treat of it by itself in the ensuing chapter, that the reader may the more distinctly comprehend it, both in the nature of the doctrine concerning it, and in the place it holds in our present discourse.

## CHAP. XV.

*Delight of Believers in the Holy Institutions of Divine Worship. The Grounds and reasons thereof. The Evidence of being Spiritually-minded thereby,* &c.

THat all true believers, whose minds are spiritually renewed, have a singular delight in all the institutions and ordinances of divine worship, is fully evident both in the examples of the saints in the scripture, and their own experience, which

which they will never forego. For this hath been the greatest cause of their suffering persecution, and martyrdom itself in all ages. If the primitive Christians under the power of the Pagan emperors, or the witnesses for Christ under the Antichristian apostacy, would, or could have omitted the observance of them (according to the advice and practice of the Gnosticks) they might have escaped the rage of their adversaries. But they loved not their lives, in comparison unto that delight which they had in the observance of the commands of Christ, as unto the duties of evangelical worship. David gives us frequently an instance hereof in himself, Psal. xlii. 1, 2, 3, 4. 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so 'panteth my soul after thee, O God. My 'soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: 'When shall I come and appear before God. My 'tears have been my meat day and night, while 'they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? 'When I remember these things, I pour out my 'soul in me; for I had gone with the multitude, 'I went with them to the house of God; 'with the voice of joy and praise, with a multi'tude that kept holy day.' Psal. lxiii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. 'O God, thou art my God, early will I 'seek thee, my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh 'longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where 'no water is: To see thy power and thy glory, 'so as I have seen thee in thy sanctuary. Because 'thy loving kindness is better than life: my lips 'shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while 'I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

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'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.' Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2, 3, 4. 'How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: My heart crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: They will be still praising thee. Selah.'

But a greater than David is here. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, did upon all occasions declare his delight in, and zeal for all the ordinances of divine worship, which was then in force by virtue of divine institution and command: For altho' he severely reproved and rejected, whatever men had added thereunto, under the pretence of a supererogating strictness, or outward order, laying it all under that dreadful sentence; 'Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be plucked up,' and so cast into the fire; yet as unto what was of divine appointment, his delight therein was singular, and exemplary unto all his disciples. With respect hereunto was it said of him, that 'the zeal of God's house had eaten him up,' by reason of the affliction which he had in his spirit, to see the worship of it neglected, polluted, and despised. This caused him to cleanse the temple, the seat of divine worship, from the pollutors and pollutions of it, not long before his sufferings, in the face and unto the high provo-

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cation of all his adversaries. So with earnest desire he longed for the celebration of his last passover, Luke xxii. 15. 'With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.' And it is a sufficient evidence of the frame of spirit and practice of his disciples afterwards, in reference to the duties of evangelical worship by his appointment; that the apostle gives it as an assured token of an unsound condition, and that which tendeth to final cursed apostacy, when any fall into a neglect of them, Heb. x. 25, 26, 27.

These things are manifest and unquestionable. But our present enquiry is only, what it is which believers do so delight in, in the ordinances and institutions of divine gospel worship, and what it is that engageth their hearts and minds unto a diligent observance of them? as also how, and wherein they do exercise their love and delight? And I say in general, that their delight in all ordinances of divine worship, as is evident in the testimonies before produced, is in Christ himself, or God in Christ: This alone is that which they seek after, cleave unto, and are satisfied with. They make use of the streams, but only as means of communication from the spring; when men are really renewed in the spirit of their minds it is so. Their regard unto ordinances and duties of divine worship, is as they are appointed of God, a blessed means of communion and intercourse between himself in Christ, and their souls. By them doth Christ communicate of his love and grace unto us; in and by them do we act faith and love

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on him. It is the treasure hid in the field, which when a man hath found he purchaseth the whole field, but it is that he may enjoy the treasure which is hid therein, Mat. xiii. 14. This field is the gospel, and all the ordinances of it. This men do purchase sometimes at a dear rate, even with the loss of all they enjoy: But yet if they obtain nothing but the field, they will have little cause to rejoice in their bargain. It is Christ the treasure alone, that pearl of price, that will eternally inrich the soul. The field is to be used only, as to find and dig up the treasure that is in it. It is, I say, Christ alone that in the preaching of the gospel, renewed affections do cleave unto as the treasure; and unto all other things, according as their relation is unto him, or they have a participation of him. Wherefore, in all duties of religion, in all ordinances of worship, their enquiry is after him whom their souls do love, Cant. i. 7.

But yet we must treat more particularly and distinctly of these things. Those whose affections are spiritually renewed, do love, adhere unto, and delight in ordinances of divine service, and duties of worship; on the grounds and reasons ensuing.

I. In general they do so, as they find faith, and love, and delight in God through Christ, excited and acted in and by them. This is their first and immediate end in their institution. It is a pernicious mistake to suppose, that any external duties of worship, as hearing the word, pray-

er, or the sacraments, are appointed for themselves, or accepted for themselves.

Such thoughts the Jews of old had concerning their sacrifices; namely, that they were appointed for their own sakes, and were acceptable service unto God, merely on their own account. Wherefore God, to deliver them from this pernicious mistake, affirms ofttimes, that he never appointed them at all; that is for any such end, Jer. vii. 22, 23. Isa. i. 12, 13, 14, &c. And now under the gospel; Sundry things destructive to the souls of men, have proceeded from such a supposition. Some hereon have always satisfyed and contented themselves with the external observance of them, without desiring or endeavouring any holy communion with God in them, or by them. This constitutes the state and condition mentioned, Rev. iii. 1. And by following this tract, the generality of Christians do wander out of the way; they cannot leave them, nor do know how to use them unto their advantage until they come wholly unto that woful state, Isaiah xxix. 13. And some to establish this deceit, have taught that there is much more in the outward work of these duties, than ever God put into them, and that they are sanctified merely by virtue of the work wrought.

But all the duties of the second commandment, (as are all instituted ordinances of worship,) are but means to express and exercise those of the first, as faith, love, fear, trust and delight in God. The end of them all is, that thro' them and by them, we may act those graces on God in

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Christ. Where this is not attended unto, when the souls of men do not apply themselves unto this exercise of grace in them, let them be never so solemn as to their outward performance, be attended unto with diligence, be performed with earnestness and delight, they are neither acceptable unto God, nor beneficial unto themselves, Isa. i. 11. This therefore is the first general spring of the love of believers, of them whose affections are spiritually renewed, unto the ordinances of divine worship, and their delight in them. They have experience that in and by them, their faith and love are excited unto a gracious exercise of themselves on God in Christ. And when they find it otherwise with them, they can have no rest in their souls. For this end are they ordained, sanctified and blessed of God, and therefore, are effectual means of it, when their efficacy is not defeated by unbelief.

And those who have no experience hereof in their attendance unto them, do, as hath been said, fall into pernicious extreams. Some continue their observance with little regard unto God, in cursed formality. So they make them a means of their ruin by countenancing of them in their security.

Others utterly reject them, at least, the most solemn of them, and therein both the wisdom, and grace, and authority of God by whom they are appointed. Because thro' the power of their own unbelief they find nothing in them.

This being the immediate end of all divine institutions, this being the only way whereby we



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may give glory unto God in their obſervance, which is their ultimate end in this world; and this being the deſign in general of believers in that obedience they yield unto the Lord Chriſt in their diligent obſervation of them: We may conſider how, in what way, and by what means thoſe whoſe affections are ſpiritually renewed, do and ought to apply their minds and ſouls unto their obſervance. And we may conſider herein, Firſt, What they do deſign. And then, What they endeavour to be found in the exerciſe and practice of, in their uſe and enjoyment.

Firſt, They come unto them with this deſire, deſign, and expectation, namely, To be enabled, directed and excited by them, unto the exerciſe of divine faith and love. When it is not ſo with any, where there is not this deſign, they do in various degrees take the name of God in vain, in their obſervance. Theſe are *Approximationes Dei*, The ways of drawing nigh unto God, as they are every where called in ſcripture. To ſuppoſe that a drawing nigh unto God may conſiſt merely in the outward performance of duty. Whatever be its ſolemnity, is to reject all due reverence of him. 'Foraſmuch, ſaith the Lord, as 'this people draw near me with their mouth, and 'with their lips do honour me, but have removed their hearts far from me, therefore I will 'proceed againſt them,' Iſaiah xxix. 13. The mouth and lips are put by a ſynechdoche, for all the means of outward worſhip and honour. Theſe men may uſe, diligently attend unto, whilſt their hearts are far from God, that is, when they do not

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draw nigh to him by faith and love. But all this worship is rejected of God, with the highest tokens of his displeasure and indignation against it.

First, Our souls then have no way of approach unto God in duties of worship, but by faith; no way of adherence or cleaving unto him, but by love; no way of abiding in him, but by fear, reverence, and delight. Whenever these are not in exercise, outward duties of worship are so far from being a means of such an approach unto him, as that they set us at a greater distance from him, than we were before, at least are utterly useless and fruitless unto us. So indeed they are unto the most who come unto them, they know not why, and behave themselves under them, they care not how: Nor is there any evil in the hearts and ways of men whereof God complaineth more in his word, as that which is accompanied with the highest contempt of him. And because these ordinances of divine worship are means which the wisdom and grace of God hath appointed unto this end, namely, The exercise and increase of divine faith and love, and therefore doth sanctify and bless them thereunto: I do not believe that they have any delight in the exercise of these graces, nor do design growth in them, by whom these great means of them are despised or neglected.

And altho' I have seen those vallies of public worship forsaken, either on pretences of higher attainments in faith, light and love, than to stand in need of them any more, or on a foolish opinion, that they cease upon the dispensation of the

Spirit, which is given unto us to make them useful and effectual, or on some provocations that have been given unto some men, or which they have taken unto themselves, which they have thought they could revenge by a neglect of public administrations, or thro' slavish peace and negligence in times of difficulty, as is the manner of some, who forsake the assemblies of the saints, Heb. xvi. 25. Yet, I never saw but it issued in a great decay, if not in an utter loss of all exercise of faith and love, and sometimes in open profaneness. For such persons contemn the way and means, which God, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, hath appointed for their exercise and increase; and this shall not prosper. We may therefore do well to consider, that the principal way whereby we may sanctify the name of God, in all duties of his worship, and obtain the benefit of them to our own souls; is by a conscientious approach unto them, with an holy desire and design to be found in the exercise of faith and love on God in Christ, and to be helped and guided therein by them.

To be under an efficacious influence from this design, is the best preparation for any duty. So David expresseth his delight in the worship of God, 'How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord 'of Hosts! My soul longeth; yea, even faint- 'eth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and 'my flesh crieth out for the living God,' Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2. He longed for the tabernacle, and the courts of it, but it was the enjoyment of God himself, the living God, that he desired and

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sought after. This was that which made him so fervent in his desires after those ordinances of God. So he expresseth it, Psal. lxiii. 2. 'To see 'thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee 'in the sanctuary.' David had great communion with, and delight in God by faith and love in the solemn duties of his worship. And this was that which inflamed him with desires after renewed opportunities unto the same end.

Secondly, This design is not general, unactive, useless and slothful. But such persons diligently endeavour in the use of these ordinances, and attendance unto them, to be found in the exercise of these graces. They have not only an antecedent design to be so, but a diligent actual endeavour after it, not suffering their minds by any thing to be diverted from the pursuit of that design, Eccles. v. 1. Whatever is not quickened and enlivened hereby; they esteem utterly lost. Neither outward administrations, nor order will give them satisfaction when these things are wanting in themselves. Without the internal actings of the life of faith, external administrations of ordinances of worship, are but dead things. Nor can any believer obtain real satisfaction in them, or refreshment by them, without an inward experience of faith and love in them, and by them. And it is that, which if we are wise, we shall continually attend unto the consideration of. A watchful Christian will be careful lest he lose any one duty, by taking up the carcase of it. And the danger of so doing, is not small. Our affections are renewed but in part. And as they

are still liable to be diverted, and seduced from spirituality in duty, even by things earthly and carnal, thro' the corruption that remaineth in them: So there is a disposition abiding in them, to be pleased with those external things in religious duties, which others, as we have shewed before, who are no way graciously renewed do satisfy themselves withal. The grace and oratory of the speaker in preaching of the word; especially in these days wherein the foppery of fine language, even in sacred things, is so much extolled; the order and circumstances of other duties, with inclination and love unto a party, are apt to insinuate themselves with great complacency into our affections, so far as they are unrenewed. And these things discover the true grounds whence it is that the ordinances of divine worship are so useless as they are to many who seem to attend unto them with diligence. They may be referred unto these three heads.

(1.) They do not come unto them, as the means appointed of God for the exercise of faith and love unto Christ, so as to make it their design in their approaches to them, without which, all that is spoken of advantage in and by other duties, is utterly lost.

(2.) They do not in and under them labour to stir up faith and love unto their due exercise.

(3.) They suffer their minds to be diverted from the exercise of these graces, partly by occasional temptations, partly by attendance unto what is outward only in the ordinances themselves.

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Spiritual affections find no place of rest in any of these things; such proposals of God in Christ, of his will, and their own duty, as may draw out their faith, love, godly fear and delight into their due exercise, is that which they enquire after, and acquiesce in.

Two things alone doth faith regard in all duties of worship as unto the outward administration of it. The one absolutely, the other comparatively; both with respect unto the end mentioned, or the exercise, growth and encrease of grace in us. The first is, that they may be of divine appointment. Where their original and observance is resolved into divine authority, there, and there alone, will they have a divine efficacy. In all these things, faith hath regard to nothing but divine precepts and promises. Whatever hath regard to any thing else, is not faith, but fancy. And therefore these uncommanded duties in religion, which so abound in the papal church, as that, if not the whole, yet all the principal parts of their worship consist in them, are such as in whose discharge it is impossible faith should be in a due exercise. That which it hath comparative respect unto, is the spiritual gifts of them unto whom the administration of the ordinances of the gospel, in the public worship of the church is committed. With respect unto them, believers may have more delight and satisfaction in the ministry of one than of another, as was touched before. But this is not because one is more learned than another, or more elegant than another, hath more ability of speech than another, or fervency in ut-

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cause than another, is more [illegible] in his delivery; but because they find the gifts of one more suited, and more effectual to stir up faith and love unto an holy exercise in their minds and hearts, than what they find in some others. Hence they have a peculiar value for, and delight in the ministry of such persons, especially when they can enjoy it in due order, and without the offence of others. And ministers that are wise, will, in holy administrations, neglect all other things, and attend unto this alone, how they may be helpful unto the faith, and love, and joy of believers, so far as they are the object of their ministry.

This is the first reason and ground whereon affections spiritually renewed, cleave unto ordinances of divine worship, with delight and satisfaction; namely, because they are the means appointed and blessed of God, for the exercise and increase of faith and love, with an experience of their efficacy unto that end.

II. The second is, Because they are the means of the communication of a sense of divine love, and supplies of divine grace unto the souls of them that do believe. So far as our affections are renewed, this is the most principal attractive to cleave unto them with delight and complacency.

They are, as was observed before, the ways of our approaching unto God. Now we do not draw nigh unto God, as himself speaks, as a dry heath, or a barren wilderness, where no refreshment is to be obtained. To make a pretence of coming unto God, and not with expectation of re-

[illegible] great things from him, is to deſpiſe God himſelf, to overthrow the nature of the duty, and deprive our own ſouls of all benefit thereby.' And want hereof, is that which renders the worſhip of the moſt, uſeleſs and fruitleſs unto themſelves. We are always to come unto God, as unto an eternal ſpring of goodneſs, grace, and mercy, of all that our ſouls do ſtand in need of, of all we can deſire in order unto our everlaſting bleſſedneſs, and all theſe things, as unto believers, may be reduced unto the two heads before mentioned.

Firſt, They come for a communica[illegible] ſenſe of his love in Jeſus Chriſt. Hence [illegible] our peace, conſolation, and joy, all our encou-ragement to do and ſuffer, according to the will of God, all our ſupportments under our ſufferings, ſolely depend; in theſe things do our ſouls live, and without them we are of all men the moſt miſerable.

It is the Holy Spirit who is the immediate efficient cauſe of all theſe things in us; 'He ſheds 'abroad the love of God in our hearts,' Rom. v. 5. He witneſſeth our adoption unto us, chap. viii. 15, 16. And thereby an intereſt in the love of the Father, in God as he is love. But the outward way and means whereby he communicates theſe things unto us, and effects them in us, is by the diſpenſation of the goſpel, or the preaching of it ordinarily. He doth the ſame work alſo in prayer, and oft-times in other holy adminiſtrations. For this end, for a participation of this grace, of theſe mercies, do believers come unto God by them.

They

They use them as means to draw water from the wells of salvation, and to receive in that spiritual sense of divine love, which God by them will communicate.

So Christ, by his word, knocks at the door of the heart, if it be opened by faith, he cometh in and suppeth with men, giving them a gracious refreshment, by the testimony of his own love, and the love of the Father, Rev. iii. 20. John xiv. 23. This believers look for in, and this they do in various measures receive by, the ordinances of divine worship. And altho' some through their fears and temptations, are not sensible hereof, yet do they secretly receive these blessed gracious supplies whereby their souls are held in life, without which they would pine away and perish. So he dealeth with them, Cant. iv. 5, 6. These are the gardens and galleries of Christ wherein he gives us of his love, Cant. vii. 12. Those who are humble and sincere, know how often their souls have been refreshed in them, and how long sometimes the impressions they have received of divine grace and love have continued with them unto their unspeakable consolation. They remember what they have received in the opening and application of the exceeding great and precious promises, that are given unto them, whereby they are gradually more and more made partakers of the divine nature; how many a time they have received light in darkness, refreshment under despondencies, relief in their conflicts with dangers and temptations, in and by them. For this cause do affections that are spiritually renewed cleave unto them.

Who

Who can but love and delight in that which he hath found by experience, to be the way and means of communicating unto him the moſt invaluable mercy, the moſt ineſtimable benefit, whereof in this life he can be made partaker? He who hath found an hidden treaſure, altho' he ſhould at once take away the whole of it; yet will eſteem the place where he found it. But if it be of that nature, that no more can be found or taken of it at once, but what is ſufficient for the preſent occaſion, yet is ſo full and boundleſs, as that whenever he comes again to ſeek for it, he ſhall be ſure to obtain preſent ſupply, he will always value it, and conſtantly apply himſelf unto it. And ſuch is the treaſure of grace and divine love, that is in the ordinances of divine worſhip.

If we are ſtrangers unto theſe things, if we have never received efficacious intimations of divine love unto our ſouls, in and by the duties of divine worſhip, we cannot love them and delight in them as we ought. What do men come to hear the word of God for? What do they pray for? What do they expect to receive from him? Do they come unto God as the eternal fountain of living waters? as the God of all grace, peace, and conſolation? Or, do they come unto his worſhip without any deſign as unto a dry and empty ſhew? Do they fight uncertainly with theſe things, as men beating the air? or do they think they bring ſomething unto God, but receive nothing from him? that the beſt of their buſineſs is to pleaſe him in doing what he commands, but to receive any thing from him they expect not, nor do ever examine themſelves whether they have

done so or no? It is not for persons who walk in such ways, ever to attain a due delight in the ordinances of divine worship.

Believers have other designs herein, and among the rest, this in the first place, that they may be afresh made partakers of refreshing comforting pledges of the love of God in Christ; and thereby of their adoption, of the pardon of their sins, and acceptance of their persons. According as they meet with these things, in the duties of holy worship, public, or private, so will they love, value and adhere unto them. Some men are full of other thoughts and affections, so as that these things are not their principal design or desire, or are contented with that measure of them which they suppose themselves to have attained; or at least are not sensible of the need they stand in, to have fresh communications of them made unto their souls; supposing that they can do well enough without a renewed sense of divine love every day; some are so ignorant of what they ought to design, to look after, in the duties of gospel worship, as that it is impossible they should have any real design in them. Many of the better sort of professors are too negligent in this matter. They do not long and pant in the inward man, after renewed pledges of the love of God; they do not consider how much need they have of them, that they may be encouraged and strengthened unto all other duties of obedience; they do not prepare their minds for their reception of them, nor come with expectation of their communication unto them; they do not rightly fix their

[illegible] namely, That these holy administrations and duties, are appointed of God in the first place, as the ways and means of conveying his love, and a sense of it, unto our souls. From hence springs all that luke-warmness, coldness, and indifferency in and unto the duties of holy worship, that are growing among us. For if men have lost the principal design of faith in them, and dis-esteem the chiefest benefit which is to be obtained by them, whence should zeal for them, delight in them, or diligence in attendance unto them arise? Let not any please themselves under the power of such decays; they are indications of their inward frame, and those infallible. Such persons will grow cold, careless, and negligent, as unto the duties of public worship, they will put themselves neither to charge nor trouble about them; every occasion of life diverts them, and finds ready entertainment in their minds; and when they do attend upon them, it is with great indifferency and unconcernedness. Yet would they have it thought, that all is still within, as ever it was; they have as good a respect unto religion as any. But these things openly discover an ulcerous disease in the very souls of men, as evidently as if it were written in their foreheads; whatever they pretend unto the contrary, they are under the power of woful decays from all due regard unto spiritual and eternal things. And I would avoid the society of such persons, as those who carry an infectious disease about them, unless it were to help on their cure.

But herein it is that affections spiritually re-

newed

newed do manifest themselves. When we do delight in, and value the duties of God's worship, because we find by experience, that they are, and have been unto us means of communicating a sense and renewed pledges of the love of God in Christ, with all the benefits and privileges which depend thereon; then are our affections renewed in and by the holy Ghost.

Secondly, They come for supplies of internal, sanctifying, strengthening grace. This is the second great design of believers in their approaches unto God in his worship. The want hereof as unto measures and degrees they find in themselves, and are sensible of it. Yea, therein lies the great burthen of the souls of believers in this world. All that we do in the life of God, may be referred unto two heads.

First, The observance of all duties of obedience.

Secondly, The conflict with, and conquest over temptations.

About these things, are we continually exercised. Hence the great thing which we desire, labour for, and pant after, is spiritual strength and ability for the discharge of ourselves in a due manner with respect unto these things. This is that which every true believer groaneth after in the inward man, and which he preferreth infinitely above all earthly things. So he may have grace sufficient in any competent measure for these ends, let what will befal him, he desireth no more in this world. God in Christ is the only fountain of all this grace. There is not one drachm of it to be

obtained

obtained but from him alone. And as he doth communicate it unto us of his own sovereign goodness and pleasure, so the ordinary way and means whereby he will do it, are the duties of his worship, Isa. xl. 28, 29, 30, 31. 'Hast thou not 'known? hast thou not heard that the everlasting 'God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the 'earth fainteth not, neither is weary? there is 'no searching of his understanding. He giveth 'power to the faint, and to them that have no 'might he increaseth strength. Even the youths 'shall faint and be weary, and the young men 'shall utterly fail. But they that wait upon the 'Lord shall renew their strength: They shall 'mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run 'and not be weary, they shall walk, and not 'faint.'

All grace and spiritual strength is originally seated in the nature of God, ver. 28. But what relief can that afford unto us who are weak, feeble, fainting. He will act suitably unto his nature, in the communication of this grace and power, ver. 29. But how shall we have an interest in this grace, in these operations: Wait on him in the ordinances of his worship, ver. 31. The word as preached, is the food of our souls whereby God administreth growth and strength unto them, John xvii. 17.----1 Pet. ii. 23. 'Desire, saith he, the 'sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow 'thereby.' But what encouragement have we thereunto, 'if so be, saith he, you have tasted 'that the Lord is gracious.' If in and by the dispensation of this word, you have had experi-

 ence

ence of the grace, the goodness, the kindness of God unto your souls, you cannot but desire it and delight in it. And otherwise, you will not do so. When men have sat some good while under the dispensation of the word, and in the enjoyment of other ordinances, without tasting in them and by them, that the Lord is gracious, they will grow weary of it and them. Wherefore, prayer is the way of his appointment for the application of our souls unto him, to obtain a participation of all needful grace, which therefore he hath proposed unto us in the promises of the covenant, that we may know what to ask, and how to plead for it. In the sacraments the same promises are sealed unto us, and the grace represented in them effectually exhibited. Meditation confirms our souls in the exercise of faith about it, and is the especial opening of the heart unto the reception of it. By these means, I say, doth God communicate all supplies of renewing, strengthening, and sanctifying grace unto us, that we may live unto him in all holy obedience, and be able to get the victory over our temptations. Under this apprehension do believers approach unto God in the ordinances of his worship. They come unto them as the means of God's communication unto their souls. Hence they cleave unto them with delight, so far as their affections are renewed. So the spouse testifieth of herself; 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight,' Cant. ii. 3. In these ordinances is the protecting, refreshing presence of Christ. This she rested in with great delight.

As they come unto them with these designs and expectations, so they have experience of the spiritual benefits and advantages which they receive by them, which more and more engageth them unto them in their affections and delights. All these things, those who have a change wrought in their affections, but not a spiritual renovation, are strangers unto. They neither have the design before-mentioned, in coming to them, nor the experience of this efficacy now proposed in their attendance on them. But these benefits are great; as for instance, When men find the worth and effect of the word preached, on their souls, in its enlightening, refreshing, strengthening, transforming power; when they find their hearts warmed, their graces excited and strengthened, the love of God improved, their desponding spirits under trials and temptations relieved, their whole souls gradually more and more conformed unto Christ; when they find themselves by it extricated out of snares, doubts, fears, temptations, and brought unto satisfaction and rest, they cannot but delight in the dispensation of it, and rejoice in it as the food of their souls. And it is a great hindrance unto the encrease of spiritual life, and obstruction unto fruitfulness, thankfulness, and consolation, when we are negligent in our meditation about the benefits that we receive by the word, and the advantages which we have thereby. For whilst it is so with us, we can neither value the grace of God, in granting us this inestimable privilege, nor perform any duty with respect unto it, in a right manner. This renders it an especi-

al object of our affections as spiritually renewed. That secret love unto, and heavenly delight in the statutes and testimonies of God, which David expresseth, Psal. cxix. arose from the spiritual benefit and advantage which he received by them, as he constantly declares. And the sole reason, on the other hand, why men grow so careless, negligent, and cold in their attendance unto the preaching of the word, is because they have no experience of any spiritual benefit, or advantage by it. They have been brought unto it by one means or another, mostly by conviction of their duty. Their minds have been variously affected with it, unto a joy in the hearing of it, and readiness unto sundry duties of obedience. But after a while, when a sense of those temporary impressions is worn off, finding no real spiritual benefit by it, they lose all delight in it, and become very indifferent as unto its enjoyment. The frame which such persons at length arrive unto is described, Mal. i. 13. and iii. 14. And none can give any greater evidence of the decay of all manner of grace in them, or of their being destitute of all saving grace, than when they apostatize from some degree of zeal for, and delight in the dispensation of the word of God, with such a cursed indifferency, as many are overtaken withal. It cannot be otherwise. For seeing this is a way and means of the exercise of all grace, it will not be neglected, but where there is a decay of all grace; however men may please themselves with other pretences. And when they are thus ensnared, every foolish prejudice, every provocation,

every wanton opinion and imagination will confirm them in, and increaſe their gradual backſliding.

And as it is with believers, as unto the hearing of the word in general, ſo it is as unto the degrees of advantage which they find by it. When men have enjoyed the diſpenſation of the word in a peculiar manner, ſpiritual and effectual, if they can be content to forego it, for that which is more cold and lifeleſs, provided it poſſeſſeth the ſame time, and outward form with the other, it is no great evidence that their ſouls do proſper. It is therefore thoſe alone, who having a ſenſe of the efficacy of the word on their ſouls and conſciences unto all the holy ends of it, who cleave unto it with ſpiritual love and delight. They continually remember what holy impreſſions it hath made on them, what engagements it hath brought their ſouls into, what encouragements unto faith and obedience it hath furniſhed them withal, and long after renewed ſenſe of its enjoyments. When we do not find in ourſelves this foundation of ſpiritual delight in the diſpenſation of the goſpel, we can have no great evidence that our affections are renewed.

So alſo it is in the duties of prayer and meditation. When the ſoul of a believer hath had experience of the communion which it hath had with God in them, or either of them; of the ſpiritual refreſhment which it hath had from them, of the benefits and mercies which are obtained by them, in recovery from temptations, ſnares, deſpondencies, in victory over ſin and Satan, in

spiritual apprehensions [illegible]
watchful frame, which hath [illegible] in o-
ther ways and occasions, with the like advanta-
ges wherewith fervent and effectual prayer, and
sincere heavenly meditation are accompanied, it
cannot but have love unto them, and delight in
them; but if indeed we have no experience of
these things, if we find not these advantages in
and by these duties, they cannot but be a burden
unto us, nor do serve unto any other end but to
satisfy convictions. He who had the benefit of a
serene and wholsome air, in a recovery from ma-
ny diseases and distempers, with the preservation
of his health so obtained, will love it and prize it,
and so will he these duties, who hath been par-
taker of any of these saving mercies and privileges
wherewith they are accompanied. Some have
been delivered from the worst of temptations, and
and the nearest approach of their prevalency (as
to destroy themselves) by a sudden remembrance
of the frame of their souls, and the intimations of
God's love, in such or such a prayer, at such a time.
Some have had the same deliverance from tempta-
tions unto sin, when they have been carried away
under the power of their corruptions, and all cir-
cumstances have concurred under the apprehen-
sions of it, a sudden thought of such a prayer or
meditation, with the engagement they made of
themselves therein unto God, hath caused all the
weapons of sin to fall out of its hands, and all
the beauties of its allurements to disappear.

When others have been under the power of
such despondencies and disconsolations, as that no
pre-

[illegible] approach unto them, they have been suddenly raised and refreshed by the remembrance of the intimate love and kindness between Christ and their souls, that hath evidenced itself in former duties. Multitudes in fears, distresses and temptations, have found relief unto their spirits, and encouragement unto their faith in the remembrance of the returns they have had unto former supplications in the like distresses. These are grounds of spiritual delight in these duties.

Heartless, lifeless, wordy prayer, the fruit of convictions and gifts, or of custom and outward occasions however multiplied, and whatever devotion they seem to be accompanied withal, will never engage spiritual affections unto them. When these things are absent, when the soul hath no experience of them, prayer is but a lifeless form, a dead carcase, which it would be a torment unto a soul spiritually alive to be tied unto. There may be a season indeed, when God will seem to hide himself from believers in their prayers, so as they shall neither find that life in themselves which they have done formerly, nor be sensible of any gracious communications from him, but this is done only for a time, and principally to stir them up unto that fervency and perseverance in prayer, as may recover them unto their former, or a better estate than yet they have attained unto. The like may be said concerning all other duties of religion, or ordinances of divine worship.

Fourthly, Believers whose affections are spiri-

tually renewed, do delight greatly in the duties of divine worſhip, becauſe they are the great inſtituted way whereby they may give glory unto God. This is the firſt and principal end of all duties of religion, as they reſpect divine appointment, namely, To aſcribe and give unto God the glory that is his due. For in them all, acknowledgment is made of all the glorious excellencies of the divine nature, our dependance on him, and relation unto him. And this is that which, in the firſt place, believers deſign in all the duties of divine worſhip. And the pattern ſet us by our bleſſed Saviour in the prayer he taught his diſciples directs us thereunto. All the firſt requeſts of it concern immediately the glory of God, and the advancement thereof. For therein alſo all the bleſſedneſs and ſafety of the church is included. Thoſe who fail in this deſign, do err in all that they do, they never tend unto the mark propoſed unto them. But this is that which principally animates the ſouls of them that believe in all their duties; this their univerſal relation unto him, and love in that relation makes neceſſary. Wherefore that way and means whereby they may directly and ſolemnly aſcribe and give glory unto God, is precious and delightful unto them: And ſuch are all the duties of divine worſhip. Theſe are ſome of the things wherein the reſpect of affections ſpiritually renewed, unto ordinances and duties of divine worſhip, doth differ from the actings of affections towards the ſame object, which are not ſo ſanctified and renewed.

There are yet other things, accompanied with the

the same evidence of the difference between affections spiritually renewed, and those which have only a general change wrought in them, by convictions and some outward occasions, which must in one or two instances more be insisted on, with the consideration of such cases as derive from them. For my design herein, is not only to declare when our minds are spiritually renewed, but also what is the nature and operation of our affections, whereby we are constituted and denominated, spiritually-minded, which is the subject of our whole enquiry. Herein then we shall proceed.

## CHAP. XVI.

*Assimulation unto things heavenly and spiritual in Affections spiritually-renewed. This Assimulation the Work of Faith. How, and whereby. Reasons of the want of Growth in our spiritual Affections, as unto this Assimulation.*

WHEN affections are spiritually renewed, in their exercise, or fixing of themselves on spiritual things; there is an assimulation wrought in them, and in the whole soul, unto those spiritual and heavenly things by faith. But when there is a change in them only, from other causes and occasions, and not from renewing grace, there is an assimulation effected of spiritual and heavenly things unto themselves, unto those affections, by imagination.

The

This must somewhat at large be spoken unto, as that which gives the most eminent distinction between the frames of mind, whose difference we enquire into. And to that end, we shall cast our consideration of it into the ensuing observations.

I. Affections spiritually-renewed are, in all their actings, in their whole exercise, under the guidance and conduct of faith. It is faith which in its spiritual light, hath the leading of the soul in the whole life of God; we live here by faith, as we shall do hereafter by light. If our affections deviate or decline in the least from the guidance of the faith, they degenerate from their spirituality, and give up themselves unto the service of superstition. Next unto corrupt secular interest in the management of crafty selfish seducers, this hath been the great in-let of all superstition and false worship into the world. Blind affection groping in the dark after spiritual things, having not the saving light of faith to conduct them; have seduced the minds of men into all manner of superstitions, imaginations, and practices, continuing to do so at this day. And wherever they will lead the way, when faith goeth not before them to discover both the way and the end, they that lead, and the mind that is led, must fall into one snare and pit or another.

Wherefore affections that are spiritually renewed, move not, act not, but as faith discovers their object, and directs them unto it. It is faith that works by love; we can love nothing sincerely with divine love, but what we believe savingly with divine faith. Let our affections unto any spiritual

things

things be never so vehement, if they spring not from faith, if they are not guided by it, they are neither accepted with God, nor will promote the interest of spirituality and holiness in our own souls, Heb. xi. 6. Mat. vi. 22, 23. And this is the reason whence we oft-times see great and plausible appearances of spiritual affections, which yet endure only for a season. They have been awakened, excited, acted by one means or another, outward or inward; but not having the light of faith to guide them unto their proper object, they either wither and die, as unto any appearing of spiritual motions, or else keep the mind tossed up and down in perpetual disquietment, without rest or peace. 'The foolish man wearieth him'self, because he cannot find the way to the city.' So was it with them who on the account of their attendance unto the doctrine of Christ, are called his disciples, John vi. Having preached unto them about the bread which came down from heaven, and giveth life unto them that feed, they were greatly affected with it, and cried out, 'Lord, 'evermore give us of this bread, ver. 34. But when he proceeded to declare the mystery of it, they having not faith to discern and apprehend it, their affections immediately decayed, and they forsook both him and his doctrine, ver. 66.

We may consider one especial instance of this nature. Persons every day fall under great and effectual convictions of sin, and of their danger or certain misery thereby. This stirs up and acts all their affections, especially their fears, hopes, desires, sorrow, self-revenge, according as their condition

dition calls for them. Hence ſometimes they grow reſtleſs in their complaints, and turn themſelves every way for relief, like men that are out of the way, and bewildered in the night. But in this ſtate and condition tell them of the only proper way and means of their relief, which, let the world ſay what it will, is Chriſt and his righteouſneſs alone, with the grace of God in him, and they quickly diſcover that they are ſtrange things unto them, ſuch as they do not underſtand, nor indeed approve. They cannot ſee them, they cannot diſcern them, nor any beauty in them for which they ſhould be deſired.

Wherefore, after their affections have been toſſed up and down for a ſeaſon, under the power and torment of this conviction, they come unto one or other of theſe iſſues with them. For either they utterly decay, and the mind loſeth all ſenſe of any impreſſions from them, ſo as that they wonder in themſelves, whence they were ſo fooliſh as to be toſſed and troubled with ſuch melancholy fancies, and ſo commonly prove as bad a ſort of men as live upon the earth; or they take up in a formal legal profeſſion wherein they never attain to be ſpiritually-minded. This is the beſt end that our affections towards ſpiritual things, not guided by the light of faith, do come unto.

II. Faith hath a clear proſpect into, and apprehenſion of ſpiritual things, as they are in themſelves, and in their own nature. It is true, the light of it cannot fully comprehend the nature of all thoſe things which are the objects of its affections,

tions, for they are infinite and incomprehensible, such as are the nature of God, and the person of Christ; and some of them, as future glory, are not yet clearly revealed: But it discerns them all in a due manner, so as that they may in themselves, and not in any corrupt representation, or imagination of them, be the object of our affections. They are, as the apostle speaks, spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14. which is the reason why the natural man cannot receive them, namely, because he hath not ability spiritually to discern them. And this is the principal end of the renovation of our minds, the principal quality and effect of faith, namely, the communication unto our minds, and the acting in us, of a spiritual saving light, whereby we may see and discern spiritual things as they are in their own nature, kind, and proper use, see Ephes. i. 17, 18, 19. 'That 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father 'of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom 'and revelation in the knowledge of him. The 'eyes of your understanding being enlightened; 'that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding 'greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, 'according to the working of his mighty power.' 2 Cor. iv. 6. 'God shines in our hearts, to give 'the light of the knowledge of his glory in the 'face of Jesus Christ.' The end God designs, is to draw our hearts and affections unto himself. And unto this end, he gives unto us a glorious internal light, whereby we may be enabled to dis-

discern the true nature of the things that we are to cleave unto with love and delight. Without this we have nothing but false images of spiritual things in our minds; not always as unto the truth or doctrine concerning them, but as unto their reality, power and efficacy. This is one of the principal effects of faith, as it is the principal part of the renovation of our minds, namely, to discover in the soul, and represent unto the affections, things spiritual and heavenly, in their nature, beauty, and genuine excellency. This attracts them, if they are spiritually renewed, and causeth them to cleave with delight unto what is so proposed unto them. He that believes in Christ in a due manner, who thereon discovers the excellency of his person, and the glory of his mediation, will both love him, and on his believing rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. So is it in all other instances; the more steady is our view by faith of spiritual things, the more firm and constant will our affections be in cleaving unto them. And wherever the mind is darkened about them, by temptation or seduction from the truth, there the affections will be quickly weakened and impaired. Wherefore,

III. Affections thus lead unto, and fixed on spiritual and heavenly things under the light and conduct of faith, are more and more renewed, or made in themselves more spiritual and heavenly. They are in their cleaving unto them, and delight in them, continually changed and assimulated unto the things themselves; becoming more and more to be what they are, namely, spiritual and heavenly.

This

This transformation is wrought by faith, and is one of the most excellent faculties and operations, see 2 Cor. iii. 18. And the means whereby it works herein, are our affections: In them as we are carnal, we are conformed unto this world; and by them as sanctified, 'are we transformed in the renewing of our minds,' Rom. xii. 2. And this transformation is the introduction of a new form or nature into our souls, diverse from that wherewith we were before endued. So is it described, Isa. xi. 6, 7, 8, 9. A spiritual nature they were changed into: And it is twofold.

First, Original and radical, as to the substance or essence of it, which is the effect of the first act of divine grace upon our souls, when we are made new creatures. Herein our affections are passive, they do not transform us, but are transformed.

Secondly, Gradual as unto its increase; and therein faith works in and by the affections.

Whenever the affections do cleave intensely unto any object, they receive an impression from it, as the wax doth from the seal when applied unto it, which changeth them into its own likeness. So the apostle affirms of sensual unclean persons; they 'have eyes full of adultery,' 2 Pet. ii. 14. Their affections are so wholly possessed and filled with their lustful objects, as that they have brought forth their own likeness upon their imaginations. That blots out all others, and leaves them no inclinations but what they stir up in them. When men are filled with the love of

world, which carries along with it all their other affections, their hopes, fears, and desires, unto a constant exercise about the same object, they become earthly-minded. Their minds are so changed into the image of the things themselves, by the effectual working of the corrupt principles of sin, self-love and lust, as if they were made up of the earth, and therefore have no savour of any thing else.

In like manner, when by faith men come to embrace heavenly things, through the effectual working of a principle of spiritual life and grace in them, they are every day more and more made heavenly. The inward man is renewed day by day. Love is more sincere and ardent, delight is more ravishing and sensible, desires are more enlarged and intense, and by all a taste and relish of heavenly things is heightned into refreshing experience, see Rom. v. 2, 3, 4, 5.

This is the way whereby one grace is added unto another, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6. in degrees. Great is the assimulation between renewed affections and their spiritual objects, that, by this means, may be attained.

The mind hereby becomes the temple of God wherein he dwells by the Spirit; Christ also dwelleth in believers, and they in him. 'God is 'love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in 'God, and God in him,' 1 John iv. 16.

Love, in its proper exercise, gives a mutual inhabitation unto God and believers. In brief, he whose affections are set upon heavenly things, in a due manner, will be heavenly-minded. And

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in the due exercise of them, will that heavenly mindedness be encreased. The transformation and assimulation that is wrought, is not in the object or spiritual things themselves, they are not changed neither in themselves, nor in the representation made of them unto our minds; but the change is in our affections which are made like unto them.

Two cases deriving from this principle and consideration, may be here spoken unto, and shall be so; the first in this, and the other in the following chapter. The one is concerning the slowness and imperceptibility of the growth of our affections in their assimulation unto heavenly things, with the causes and reasons of it. The other is, the decays that frequently befal men in their affections unto spiritual things, instead of growing and thriving in them, with the reasons and causes thereof.

First, This progress and growth of our affections into spirituality and heavenliness, into conformity unto the things they are set upon, is ofttimes very slow, and sometimes imperceptible. Yea, for the most part, it is a hard thing to find it satisfactorily in ourselves or others. Our affections stand like shrubs in the wilderness, which see not when good cometh, and are not like plants in a garden enclosed, which is watered every day. But it is not so without our folly and our sin.

The folly that keeps many in this condition, consists herein; the generality of Christians are contented with their present measures, and design little more, than not to lose the ground they have



gained.

gained. And a pernicious folly it is, that both ruins the glory of religion and deprives the souls of men, of peace and consolation. But so it is, men have some grounds of persuasion, or at least they hope, and suppose they have such grounds, that they are passed from death unto life, that they are in a state of grace and acceptance with God. This state they will endeavour to preserve by a diligent performance of the duties it requireth, and the avoidance of such sins, whereby they might make a forfeiture of it. But as for earnest watchful endeavours and diligence to thrive in this state, to grow in grace, to be changed from glory to glory into the image of Christ, to press forwards towards the mark of the high-calling, and after perfection, to lay hold upon eternal life, to be more holy, more humble, more righteous, more spiritually-minded, to have their affections more and more transformed into the likeness of things above; they are but few, that sincerely and diligently apply themselves unto it, or unto the means of these things. The measures which they have attained unto, give satisfaction unto the church, and reputation in the world, that they are professors, and some so speak peace unto their own souls. To be more holy and heavenly, to have their affections more taken up with the things above, they suppose somewhat inconsistent with their present occasions and affairs. By this means hath religion lost much of its glory, and the souls of men have been deprived of the principal advantages of it in this world.

Such persons are like unto them who live in a coun-

country wherein they are not only pressed with poverty, and all sorts of misery; but are also obnoxious unto grievous punishments, and death itself, if they are taken in it. In this condition they are told and assured of another country, wherein so soon as they are arrived, they shall be freed from all fear of danger of punishment, and if they pass further into it, they shall meet with riches, plenty and a fair inheritance provided for them. Hereon they betake themselves unto their voyage to obtain an entrance into it, and possession of it. But no sooner do they come within the borders, and so are free from danger, or fear of punishment and death, but they sit down and will go no further, to enjoy the good things of the country whereunto they are come. And it falls out with many of them, that through their sloath, negligence and ignorance, they take up short of the true bounds and limits of the country of liberty and peace which they aimed at, whereby danger and death surprize them unawares. This ruin could not have befallen them, had they industriously endeavoured to enter into the heart of the country, and have possessed the good things thereof. At best, being only in the borders, they lead a poor life all their days, exposed to wants and dangers.

So it is in this case. Men falling under the power of convictions, and those restless fears wherewith they are accompanied, will stir up themselves, and enquire how they may fly from the wrath to come, how they may be delivered

from the ſtate of ſin, and the eternal miſery which will enſue thereon.

In the goſpel not only mercy and pardon are propoſed unto them on their believing, which is the firſt entrance into the heavenly country; but peace, and joy, and ſpiritual ſtrength upon their admiſſion into it, and a progreſs made in it by faith and obedience. But many when they have attained ſo far, as that they have ſome hopes of pardon and freedom from the curſe, ſo as to deliver them from their tormenting fears, will endeavour to preſerve thoſe hopes, and keep that ſtate; but will not paſs on to a full enjoyment of the precious things of the goſpel, by growth in grace and ſpiritual affections. But how many of them fall under woful miſtakes. For ſuppoſing themſelves to be in a goſpel ſtate, it proves in the iſſue, that they never entred into it. They were not it may be far from the kingdom of heaven, in the ſame ſenſe as it was ſpoken of him who never came thither. There is no way to ſecure an intereſt in the goſpel, as to pardon and mercy, ſafety and deliverance, but by a growth in grace, holineſs, and ſpirituality, which gives an entrance into the choiceſt mercies and privileges of it.

This folly of men in taking up with their meaſures, endeavouring only to maintain that ſtate and condition which they hope they have attained, is the great reaſon why their affections do not daily grow up into ſpirituality, thro' an aſſimulation unto heavenly things. And a folly it is, attended with innumerable aggravations: As for inſtance.

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First, It is contrary and destructive unto the genuine and principal property of gospel grace. For it is every where compared by our Saviour unto things which from small seeds and beginnings, do grow up by a continual increase unto large measures, as to a grain of mustard seed, a little leaven, and the like.

That grace in whose nature it is not to thrive and grow, may justly be suspected, and ought diligently to be examined by them who take care of their own souls, and would not be eternally deceived.

Secondly, It is contrary unto the most excellent or invaluable evangelical promises recorded in the Old Testament and the New; and which are amongst the principal supportments of the faith, hope, and comfort of believers. God hath given them unto us, to encourage us unto an expectation of such supplies of grace, as shall cause us to thrive and grow against all opposition, unto the utmost of our continuance in this world. And they are so multiplied as that there is no need to mention any of them in particular; God evidencing thereby how great is the grace, and how precious, which he so often promiseth, and of what consideration it is of unto ourselves, see Psal. xcii. 13, 14, 15. Isaiah xl. 28, 29, 30, 31. Wherefore the folly of taking up with present measures of grace, holiness, and spirituality, is attended with two unspeakable evils.

1st, A signal contempt of the love, grace, faithfulness, and wisdom of God, in giving of us such promises of grace, to make us to encrease, thrive,

and grow. How can it be done more effectually, than by such a neglect of his promised grace?

2dly, An evidence that such persons love not, care not for grace or holiness for their own souls, but merely to serve their turn at present as they suppose; nor do desire the least of grace or privilege by Christ, without which they can have any hopes to get to heaven. This sufficiently discovers men to be wholly under the power of self-love, and to center therein; for if they may have so much grace and mercy, as may save them, they care for no more.

Thirdly, It is repugnant unto the honour of gospel grace, as though it would carry us so far, and no farther in the way to glory. For it must be known that this sort of persons who sit down in their present measures and attainments, either really have no true grace at all, or that which is of the lowest, meanest, and most imperceptible size and degree. For if any one hath attained any considerable growth in faith and love, in the mortification of sin, in heavenly-mindededness, it is utterly impossible but that ordinarily he will be pressing forwards towards farther attainments, and farther degrees of spiritual strength in the life of God. So the apostle declares it in his own example, Phil. iii. 10, 11, 12, 13. What thoughts can these persons have concerning the glory, power, and efficacy of gospel grace, which they suppose they have received. If they measure them by the effects which they find in themselves, either as unto the mortification of sin, or

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ſtrength unto, and delight in duties of holineſs, or as unto ſpiritual conſolation, they can ſee no excellency nor beauty in them. For they do not manifeſt themſelves but in their ſucceſs, as they tranſform the ſoul daily into the image of Chriſt.

Fourthly, It is that which hath loſt the reputation and glory of religion in the world, and therein the honour of the goſpel itſelf. For the moſt of profeſſors do take up with ſuch meaſures as put no luſtre upon it, as give no commendation unto the religion they profeſs. For their meaſures allow them ſuch a conformity unto the world, in their ways, words and actions, in their geſtures, apparel, and attire, as that they are no way viſibly to be diſtinguiſhed from it. Yea, the ground and reaſon why the moſt do reſt in their preſent meaſures, is becauſe they will not be further differenced from the world. This hath greatly loſt the glory, honour and reputation of religion amongſt us. And, on the other ſide, if all viſible profeſſors would endeavour continually to grow and thrive in ſpirituality of mind, and heavenlineſs of affections, with fruits ſuited thereunto, it would bring a conviction on the world, that there is a ſecret inviſible power, accompanying the religion they profeſs, transforming them daily into the image and likeneſs of God.

Fifthly, Whatever is pretended unto the contrary, it is inconſiſtent with all ſolid peace of conſcience. For no ſuch thing is promiſed unto any who live in ſuch a contempt of divine promiſes; nor is it attainable but by the diligent exerciſe of

all those graces which ly neglected under this frame. Few men are able to judge whether they have real, eternal, abiding peace or no, unless it be in case of trials and temptations. At other seasons, general hopes and confidences do, or may supply the want of it in their minds. But when any fear, danger, trial, or word of conviction befalls them, they cannot but enquire and examine how it is with them. And if they find their affections cold, dead, earthly, carnal, withering, not spiritual or heavenly, there will be an end of their supposed peace, and they will fall into woful disquietments, and they will then find that the root of all this evil lies in this frame and disposition. They have been so far satisfied with their present measures or attainments in religion, as that the utmost of their endeavours have been, but to preserve their station, or not to forfeit it by open sins, to keep their souls alive from the severe reflections of the word, and their reputation fair in the church of God. Spiritually to thrive, to prosper in their souls, to wax fat and flourishing in the inward man, to bring forth more fruit as age increaseth, to press towards perfection, are things they have not designed nor pursued.

Hence it is that so many among us, are visibly at an unthrifty stand in the world; that where they were one year, there they are another, like shrubs in the wilderness, not like the plants in the garden of God, not as vines planted in a very fruitful hill. Yea, tho' many are sensible themselves, that they are cold, lifeless, and fruitless, yet will they not be convinced, that there is a ne-

necessity of making a daily progress in spirituality and heavenly-mindedness, whereby the inward man may be renewed day by day, and grace augmented with the increase of God. This is a work as they suppose for them who have nothing else to do; not consistent with their business, callings, and occasions, not necessary as they hope unto their salvation, nor it may be, to be attained by them, if they should set themselves about it. This apprehension or imagination, upon the beginning of the declension, and decay of the Christian religion in many, cast off all holiness and devotion unto a sort of men who undertook to retire themselves utterly out of the world, amongst whom also the substance of religion was quickly lost, and a cloud, or meteor of superstition, embraced in the room of it. But this folly is ominous unto the souls of men.

Those who have made the greatest progress in the conformity of their affections unto things spiritual and heavenly, know most of its necessity, excellency, and desireableness; yea, without some progress in it, these things will not be known. Such will testify, that the more they attain herein, the more they see there is yet to be attained, and the more they do desire to attain what is behind. 'Forgetting those things which are behind, they reach forth unto the things that are 'yet before them; like men running in a race, 'whose prize and reward is yet before them,' Phil. iii. 13, 14. It is a comely thing to see a Christian weaned from the world, minding heavenly things, green and flourishing in spiritual

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affection. And it is the more lovely, because it is so rare. The generality of them take up with those measures, which neither glorify God, nor bring in durable peace into their own souls.

That which men pretend, and complain of herein, is the difficulty of the work. They can, as they suppose, preserve their present station, but to press forward to grow in grace, to thrive in their affections, this is too hard for them. But this complaint is unequal and unjust, and adds unto the guilt of their sloth. It reflects upon the words of our Saviour, that his yoke is easy, and his burden light, that his commandments are not grievous. It expresseth unbelief in the promises of God, tendring such supplies of grace as to render all the ways of wisdom easy, yea, mercy and peace. It is contrary unto the experience of all who have, with any sincerity and diligence, engaged in the ways of gospel obedience. And the whole cause of the pretended difficulty lies in themselves alone; which may be reduced unto these two heads.

First, A desire to retain some thing, or things, that is, or are inconsistent with such a progress. For unless the heart be ready on all occasions, to esteem every thing as loss and dung, so as we may win Christ, the work will be accompanied with insuperable difficulties. This is the first principle of religion, of gospel obedience, that all things are to be despised for Christ. But this difficulty ariseth not from the thing itself, but from our indisposition unto it, and unfitness for it. That which is an easy pleasant walk unto a sound

sound and healthy man, is a toilsome journey to him that is diseased and infirm. In particular, whilst men will retain an inordinate respect unto the world, the vanities, the pleasures, the profits, the contentments of it; whilst self-love, putting an undue valuation on our persons, our relations, our enjoyments, our reputations, doth cleave unto us, we shall labour in the fire when we engage in this duty; or rather we shall not at all sincerely engage in it; wherefore the apostle tells us, that in this case, we must cast off every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, if we intend to run with joy the race that is set before us, Heb. xii. 1.

Secondly, It is because men dwell continually upon the entrances of religion in the first and lowest exercise of grace; some are always beginning at religion, and the beginning of things are always difficult. They design not to be compleat in the whole will of God, nor to give all graces their perfect work. They do not with use, habituate grace unto a readiness in all the actings of it, which the apostle commends in them that are perfect or compleat, Heb. v. 14. Hence he calls such persons babes, and carnal, comparatively unto them that are strong men and spiritual. Such persons do not oblige themselves unto the whole work, and all the duties of religion, but only what they judge necessary unto them in their present circumstances. In particular, they do not attempt a thorow-work in the mortification of any sin, but are hewing and hacking at it, as their convictions are urgent, or abate, the wounds whereof

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in the body of sin, are quickly healed. They give not any grace its perfect work, but are always making essays, and so give over.

Whilst it is thus with any, they shall always be deluded with the apprehensions of insuperable difficulties, as to the growth of their affections in spirituality and heavenliness. Remove these things out of the way, as they ought to be removed, and we shall find all the paths wherein we are to walk towards God, to be pleasantness and peace.

This is the first cause whence it is, that there may be affections truly spiritual and graciously renewed in some persons, who yet do not thrive in an assimulation and conformity unto heavenly things. Men take up with their present measures; and thereon pretend either necessary occasion, or discouragements from difficulties in attempting spiritual growth in the inward man. But they may thank themselves, if as they bring no honour unto Christ, so they have no solid peace in their own souls.

Secondly, As the evil proceedeth from folly, so it is always the consequent of sin, of many sins, of various sorts. Let us not dwell on heartless complaints, that we do not find our affections lively and heavenly; that we do not find the inward man to thrive or grow. Let us not hearken after this or that relief or comfort under this consideration, as many things are usually insisted on unto that purpose. They may be of use, when persons are under temptations, and not able to make a right judgment of themselves. But in the course of our ordinary walking with God, they

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are not to be attended, nor retired unto. The general reason of this evil state, is our own sinful carelessness, negligence and sloth, with perhaps an indulgence unto some known lust or corruption. And we do in vain seek after refreshing cordials, as tho' we were only spiritually faint, when we stand in need of launcings and burnings, as nigh unto a lethargy. It would be too long to give instances of these sins, which fail not effectually to obstruct the thriving of spiritual affections. But in general, when men are careless as unto that continual watch which they ought to keep over their hearts; whilst they are negligent in holy duties, either as unto the seasons of them, or the manner of their performance; when they are strangers unto holy meditation, and self-examination; whilst they inordinately pursue the things of the world, or are tender and delicate, as that they will not undergo the hardship of an heavenly life, either as unto the inward or outward man; much more when they are vain in their conversation, corrupt in their communication, especially if under the predominant influence of any particular lust, it is vain to think of thriving in spiritual affections. And yet thus it is with all who ordinarily, and in their constant course are thriftless herein.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XVII.

*Decays in spiritual Affections, with the Causes and Danger of them. Advice unto them who are sensible of the evil of spiritual Decays.*

IT must be acknowledged, that there is yet that which is worse than what we have yet insisted on, and more opposite unto the growth of affections in conformity unto heavenly things, which is the proper character of those that are spiritually-renewed. And this is their spiritual decay manifesting itself in sensible and visible effects.

Some there are, yea many, who upon the beginning of a profession of their conversion unto God, have made a great appearance of vigorous, active, spiritual affections; yea, it is so with most, it may be, all who are really so converted. God takes notice of the love of the youth in his people, of the love of their espousals.

In some, this vigour of spiritual affections is from the real power of grace, exerting its efficacy on their hearts and in their minds. In others, it is from other causes, as for instance, relief from conviction by spiritual illumination, will produce this effect. And this falls out unto the advantage of such persons that generally a change is wrought in their younger days. For then their

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affections in their natural powers are active, and bear great sway in the whole soul. Wherefore the change that is made, is most eminent in them, be it what it will. But as men increase in age, and thereon grow up in carnal wisdom, and a great valuation of earthly things, with their care about them, and converse in them, they abate and decay in their spiritual affections every day. They will abide in their profession, but have lost their first love.

It is a shame and folly unutterable, that it should be so with any who make profession of that religion, wherein there are so many incomparable excellencies to endear and engage them to it more and more; but why should we hide what experience makes manifest in the sight of the sun; and what multitudes proclaim concerning themselves? Wherefore I look upon it as a great evidence, if not absolutely of the sincerity of grace, yet of the life and growth of it, when men as they grow up in age, do grow in an undervaluation of present things, in contempt of the world, in duties of charity and bounty, and decay not in any of them. But I say, it is usual that the entrances of mens profession of religion and conversion unto God, are attended with vigorous active affections towards spiritual things. Of them who really and sincerely believed, it is said, that on their believing, they rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. And of those who only had a work of conviction on them, improved by temporary faith, that they received the word with joy, and did many things gladly.

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In this ſtate do many abide and thrive, until their affections be wholly transformed into the image and likeneſs of things above. But with many of all ſorts it is not ſo; they fall into woful decays as unto their affections about ſpiritual things, and conſequently in their whole profeſſion and converſation, their moiſture becomes as the drought in ſummer. They have no experience of the life and actings of them in themſelves, nor any comfort, or refreſhment from them; they honour not the goſpel with any fruits of love, zeal, or delight, nor are uſeful any way unto others by their example. Some of them have had ſeeming recoveries, and are yet again taken into a lifeleſs frame: Warnings, afflictions, ſickneſſes, the word have awakened them, but they are fallen again into a dead ſleep; ſo as that they ſeem to be 'trees whoſe fruit withereth, without fruit, twice 'dead, plucked up by the roots.'

Some things muſt be ſpoken unto this woful condition in general, as that which is directly oppoſite unto the grace and duty of being ſpiritually-minded; and contrary unto, and obſtructive of the growth of ſpiritual affections in an aſſimulation unto heavenly things. And what ſhall be ſpoken may be applied unto all the degrees of theſe decays, tho' all of them are not alike dangerous or perillous.

*Firſt*, There may be a time of temptation, wherein a ſoul may apprehend in itſelf not only a decay in, but an utter loſs of all ſpiritual affections, when yet it is not ſo. As believers may apprehend and judge that the Lord hath forſaken

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and forgotten them when he hath not done so, Isai. xlix. 14, 15. So they may, under their temptations, apprehend, that they have forsaken God, when they have not done so: As a man in the night may apprehend he hath lost his way, and be in great distress, when he is in his proper road. For temptation brings darkness and amazement, and leads into mistakes and a false judgment in all things. They find not, it may be, grace working in love, joy and delight as formerly, nor that activity of heart and mind in holy duties which spiritual affections gave unto them. But yet, it may be, the same grace works in godly sorrow, by mourning, humiliation, and self-abasement, no less effectually, nor less acceptably unto God. Such as these I separate from the present consideration.

Secondly, There may be a decay in affections themselves, as unto their actings towards any objects whatever; at least as unto the outward symptoms and effects of them, and on this ground, their operations towards spiritual things may be less sensible. So men in their younger days may be more ready to express their sorrow by tears, and their joy by sensible exaltation and motion of their spirits, than in riper years. And this may be so, when there is no decay of grace in the affections as renewed. But,

(1.) When it is so, it is a burthen unto them in whom it is. They cannot but mourn and have a godly jealousy over themselves, least the decays they find, should not be in the outward, but the inward, nor in the natural, but the spiritual man.

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And they will labour that in all duties, and at all times, it may be with them, as in days of old, altho' they cannot attain ſtrength in them, or that vigour of ſpirit, that life, joy, peace, and comfort which many have had experience of.

(2.) There will be in ſuch perſons, no decays in holineſs of life, nor as unto diligence in all religious duties. If the decay be really of grace in the affections, it will be accompanied with a proportionable decay in all other things, wherein the life of God is concerned. But if it be only as unto the ſenſible actings of natural affections, no ſuch decay will enſue.

(3.) Grace will in this caſe more vigorouſly act itſelf in the other faculties and powers of the ſoul, as the judgment and the will in their approbation of, and firm adherence unto ſpiritual things.

(4.) When men find, or may find their affections yet quick, active, and intent on other things, as the lawful enjoyments and comforts of this life, it is in vain for them to relieve themſelves, that the decays they find, are in their affections as natural, and not as they ought to be gracious. If we ſee a man in his old age grow more in love with the things of this world, and leſs in love with the things of God, it is not thro' the weakneſs of nature, but thro' the ſtrength of ſin.

On theſe, and it may be, ſome other the like occaſions, there may be an apprehenſion of a decay in ſpiritual affections, when it may not be ſo, at leaſt not unto the degree that is apprehended. But when it is ſo really, as it is evidently with many, I had almoſt ſaid with the moſt in theſe days,

days, it is a woful frame of heart, and never enough to be lamented. It is that which lies in direct contradiction unto that spiritual-mindedness which is life and peace. It is a consumption of the soul which threatens it with death every day.

It belongs not unto my design to treat of it in particular; yet I cannot let it pass without some remarks upon it, it being an evil almost epidemical among professors, and prevalent in some unto such a degree, as that they seem to be utterly forsaken of all powers of spiritual life.

Now besides all that folly and sin which we before discovered as the causes of the want of the growth of our affections in spirituality and heavenliness, which in this case of their decay are more abominable, there is a multiplication of evils wherewith this state of heart and mind is accompanied. For

First, It is that which of all things, the Lord Christ is most displeased with in churches or professors. He pities them in their temptations, he suffers with them in their persecution, he interceeds for them on their surprizal, but threatens them under their spiritual decays, Rev. ii. 4, 5. chap. iii. 2. This he cannot bear with, as that which both reflects dishonour upon himself, and which he knows to be ruinous unto those in whom it is. He will longer bear with them who are utterly dead, than with those who abide under these decays, Rev. iii. 15, 16. This is the only case wherein he threatens to reject and cast off a professing church, to take away his candlestick from it, unless it be that of false worship and idolatry.

dolatry. He that ſpake thus unto the churches of old, ſpeaks now the ſame unto us; for he lives for ever, and is always the ſame, and his word is living and unchangeable. There is not one of us who are under this frame, but the Lord Chriſt by his word and ſpirit teſtifieth his diſpleaſure againſt us, and if he be againſt us, who ſhall plead for us. Conſider what he ſays in this caſe, Rev. ii. 5. chap. iii. 3. O who can ſtand before theſe dreadful intimations, of his diſpleaſure! The Lord help us to mind it, leaſt he in whom we profeſs to place our only truſt, be in our trial found our greateſt enemy. Take heed of ſuch ſins as Chriſt himſelf our only advocate hath put a mark upon, as thoſe which he will not ſave us in.

Secondly, It is that wherewith above all things the holy Spirit is grieved. His work it is to give grace an encreaſe and progreſs in our ſouls. He begins it, and he carries it on. And there can be no greater grief unto a wiſe and gracious worker, than to have his work decay and go backward under his hand. This is the occaſion of thoſe complaints of God which we find in the ſcripture, of the unprofitableneſs and backſliding of men after the uſe of means and remedies for their fruitfulneſs and cure. 'What, ſaith he, could I have 'done more for my vineyard than I have done? 'Why then, when I looked for grapes, did it 'bring forth wild grapes.' Can any thing be apprehended to be ſuch a juſt matter of grief and complaint unto the holy Spirit, to ſee and find thoſe whom he had once raiſed up unto holy and heavenly affections, ſo as that their delight were in,

in, and their thoughts much upon the things that are above, to become earthly or ſenſual, to have no ſenſible actings of any of his graces in them which is the ſtate of them who are under the power of ſpiritual decays. And this is the only cauſe wherein God ſpeaks unto men in the way of complaint and expoſtulation; and uſeth all ſorts of arguments to convince them of their folly herein.

When a wiſe, tender, and careful parent, hath been diligent in the uſe of all means for the education of his child, and he, for ſome time, hath given good hopes of himſelf, finds him to ſlacken in his diligence, to be careleſs in his calling, to delight in evil company, how ſolicitous is his heart about him, how much is he grieved, and affected with his miſcarriage. The heart of the Spirit of God is infinitely more tender towards us, than that of the moſt affectionate parent can be towards an only child. And when he with coſt and care hath nouriſhed, and brought us up unto ſome growth and progreſs in ſpiritual affections, wherein all his concerns in us do ly, for us to grow cold, dull, earthly-minded, to cleave unto the pleaſures, or luſts of this world, how is he grieved, how is he provoked. It may be this conſideration of grieving the holy Spirit, is of no great weight with ſome; they ſhould have little concernment herein, if they could well free themſelves in other reſpects; but let ſuch perſons know, it is impoſſible for them to give a greater evidence of a profligate hardneſs in ſin.

Thirdly, This is that which in an eſpecial manner

ner provoketh the judgments of God against any church, as was intimated before. When in the order of profession and worship, any church hath a name to live, but as to the power of grace acting in the affections is dead: When it is not so cold as to forsake the external institutions of worship, nor so hot as to enliven their duties with spiritual affections, the Lord Christ will not bear with them; yea, judgment, will suddenly break out towards such an house of God.

Fourthly, It is absolutely inconsistent with all comfortable assurance of the love of God. Whatever persons, under the power of such a frame, pretend unto of that kind, it is sinful security, not gracious assurance or peace. And constantly as professors grow cold, and decay in their spiritual affections, stupidity of conscience, and security of mind do grow also upon them. It is so, I say, unless they are sometimes surprized or overtaken with some greater sin, which reflects severely on their consciences, and casts them for a time under troubles and distresses. But that peace with God, and a comfortable assurance of salvation, should be consistent with an habitual decay in grace, especially in those graces which should act themselves in our affections, is contrary to the whole tenour and testimony of the scripture; and the supposition of it would be the bane and poison of religion. I do not say that our assurance and peace with God, do arise wholly from the actings of grace in us; there are other causes of them, whereinto they are principally resolved: But this I say, under an habitual declension, or decay of grace

grace in the spirituality of our affections, no man can keep or maintain a gracious sense of the love of God, or of peace with him. And therefore there is no duty more severely to be pressed on all at this day, than a diligent examination and trial of the grounds of their peace; least it should be with any of them as it was with Laodicea, who was satisfied with her good state and condition, when it was most miserable, and almost desperate. Yea, I must say, that it is impossible that many professors, whom we see and converse withal, should have any solid peace with God. Do men gather figs from thorns, or grapes from thistles? It is a fruit that will not grow on a vain, earthly, selfish frame of mind and conversation. And therefore such persons, whatever they pretend, are either asleep in a sinful security, or live on most uncertain hopes, which probably may deceive them. Nothing can be so ruinous unto our profession, as once to suppose it is an easy matter, a thing of course, to maintain our peace with God. God forbid but that our utmost diligence, and continued endeavours to thrive in every grace should be required thereunto. The whole beauty and glory of our religion depends hereon. 'To 'be spiritually-minded is life and peace.'

Fifthly, Such a decay as that described, is a dangerous symptom of an evil state and condition, and that those in whom it is, will at last be found to be but Hypocrites. I know such persons will, or may have pretended evidences unto the contrary, and that they are well enough satisfied of, and with their own sincerity, in many things; so

as that is impossible to fix upon them the sense and conviction of being but Hypocrites. But this apprehension ariseth from a false notion of of Hypocrisy. No man they suppose is an Hypocrite, but he that generally, or universally pretends himself in religion to be what he is not, and what he knows himself not to be, or at least, might easily do so. And it is true, that this is the broadest notion of Pharisaical Hypocrisy. But take an Hypocrite for him, who under light, profession, gifts, duties, doth habitually and willingly fail in any point of sincerity, he is no less a perishing Hypocrite than the former, and it may alter the case with them. I do not say that every one in whom there is this prevalent decay in spiritual affections, is an Hypocrite; God forbid: I only say, that where it continues without remedy, it is such a symptom of Hypocrisy, as that he who is wise, and hath a care of his soul, will not rest until he hath searched it unto the bottom. For it seems as if it were thus with such persons: They have had a false or imperfect work in that conversion unto God which they have professed. Conviction of sin, communication of spiritual light and gifts, alteration upon the affections, change of society and conversation, have made it up. Now it is the nature of such a work greatly to flourish for a season, in all the principal parts and duties of profession. But it is, in its nature, also gradually to decay, until it be quite withered away. In some it is lost by the power of some vigorous temptations, and particular lusts indulged unto, ending in worldliness and sensuality; but in the most

most it decays gradually, until it hath lost all its favour and sap, see John xv. 3. Wherefore whilst men find this decay in themselves, unless they are fallen under the power of a destructive security, unless they are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, they cannot but think it their duty to examine how things stand with them, whether they ever effectually closed with Christ, and had the faith of God's elect, which works by love; seeing it is with them, as tho' they had only a work of another nature. For a saving work in its own nature, and in the diligent use of means, thrives, and groweth, as the whole scripture testifieth; but it is this false and imperfect working, that hath no root, and is thus subject to withering.

Sixthly, Persons in such an estate are apt to deceive themselves with false hopes and notions, whereby the deceitfulness of sin doth put forth its power, to harden them unto their ruin. Two ways there are whereby this pernicious effect is produced. The one by the prevalency of a particular lust or sin, the other by a neglect of spiritual duties, and a vain conversation in the world, under which the soul pines away and consumes.

As unto the first of these, there are three false notions, whereby the deceitfulness of sin, deludes the souls of men.

The first is, That it is that one sin alone wherein they would be indulged. Let them be spared in this one thing, and in all other they will be exact enough. This is the composition that Naaman would have made in the matters of religion 2 Kings v. 18. And it is that which many trust unto.

unto. Hence it hath by the event, been made to appear, that some persons have lived long in the practice of some gross sins, and yet all the while used a semblance of great diligence in other duties of religion. This is a false notion whereby poor sinners delude their own souls. For suppose it possible, that a man should give himself up unto any lust, or be under the power of it, and yet be observant of all other duties, yet this would give him no relief as unto the eternal condition of his soul. The rule is peremptory unto this purpose, Jam. ii. 10, 11. One sin willingly lived in, is as able to destroy a man's soul, as a thousand. Besides, it is practically false. There is no man that lives in any one known sin, but he really lives in more, tho' that only bears the chiefest sway. With some such persons, these sins appear unto others, who observe their frame and spirit, tho' they appear not to themselves; in some they are manifest in themselves, altho' they are hidden from others, 1 Tim. v. 24. But let no man relieve himself with thoughts that it is but one sin, whilst that one sin keeps him in a constant neglect of God. Hence,

Secondly, They deceive themselves hereby, for they judge that altho' they cannot as yet shake off their sin, yet they will continue still to love God, and abound in the duties of his worship. They will not become haters of God and his ways, and persecutors for all the world, and therefore hope that notwithstanding this one Zoar, this lesser sin, which their constitution and their circumstances engage them in, that it may be well with them at the

the *last*. This also is a false notion, a meer instrument in the hand of sin to act its deceit by. For no man that willingly liveth in any sin, can love God at all, as is evident in that rule, 1 John ii. 15. It is but a false pretence of love to God, that any man hath, who liveth in any known sin. Where God is not loved above all, he is not loved at all: And he is not so, where men will not part with one cursed lust for his sake. Let not your light deceive you, nor your gifts, nor your duties, nor your profession; if you live in sin, you love not God.

Thirdly, They determine that at such or such a season or time, after such a satisfaction given unto their lusts or pleasures, they will utterly give over, so as that iniquity shall not be their ruin. But this is a false notion also, an effectual instrument of the deceitfulness of sin. He that will not now give over, who will not immediately upon the discovery of the prevalency of any sin, and warning about it, endeavour sincerely and constantly its relinquishment, say what he will, and pretend what he will, he never intends to give over; nor is it probable in any ordinary way, that ever he will do so. When mens decays are from the prevalency of particular sins, by these and the like false notions do they harden themselves unto ruin.

For those who are pining away under hectical consumptions, a general decay of the vital spirits of religion, they have also false notions, whereby they deceive themselves. As,

First, That although they have some cause to mis-

mistrust themselves, yet indeed their condition is not so bad as some may apprehend it, or as they are warned it is. And this ariseth from hence, that they have not as yet been overtaken with any enormous sin, which hath filled their consciences with terror and disquietment. But this is a false notion also; for every decay is dangerous, especially, such as the mind is ready to plead for, and to countenance itself in.

Secondly, They are prone to suppose that this decay doth not arise from themselves, and the evil of their own hearts; but from their circumstances, business, present occasion, and state of life, which when they are freed from, they will at last return unto their former love, and delight in spiritual things. But this is a false notion also, by virtue of that rule, Heb. iii. 12. Let mens circumstances and occasions of life be what they will, all their departures from God, are from an evil heart of unbelief.

Thirdly, They judge it no hard matter to retrieve themselves out of this state, it is that which they can easily do, when there is an absolute necessity of it. But this is a false notion also. Recovery from backsliding is the hardest task in Christian religion, and which few make either comfortable, or honourable work of.

In this state, I say, men are apt, by such false reasonings, to deceive themselves unto their eternal ruin; which makes the consideration of it the more necessary.

Wherefore, I say, lastly, upon the whole, That who so find themselves under the power of

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this wretched frame, who are ſenſible in themſelves, or at leaſt make it evident unto others, that they are under a decay in their ſpiritual condition; if they reſt in that ſtate, without groaning, labouring, endeavouring for deliverance from it, they can have no well-grounded hopes in themſelves of life and immortality; yea, they are in thoſe paths which go down unto the chambers of death.

I cannot let this paſs without ſomething of advice unto them who find themſelves under ſuch decays, are ſenſible of them, and would be delivered from them, and I ſhall give it in a few words.

Firſt, Remember former things, call to mind how it was with you in the ſpring and vigour of your affections, and compare your preſent ſtate, enjoyment, peace and quiet with what they were then. This will be a great principle of return to God, Hoſ. ii. 7. And to put a little weight upon it, we may conſider.

(1.) God himſelf makes it, on his part, a ground and reaſon of his return unto us, in a way of mercy, and of the continuance of his love, Jer. ii. 2. Even when a people are under manifold decays, whilſt they are yet within the bounds of God's covenant and mercy, he will remember their firſt love, with the fruits and actings of it in trials and temptations, which moves his compaſſion towards them. And the way to have God thus remember it, is for us to remember with delight and longing of ſoul that it were with us as in thoſe days of old, when we had the love of

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espousals for God in Christ, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20.

(2.) It is the way whereby the saints of old have refreshed and encouraged themselves under their greatest despondencies. So doth the Psalmist in many places, as for instance, Psalm xlii. 6. 'O my God, my soul is cast down within me: 'therefore will I remember thee from the land 'of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the 'hill Missar.' David, in the time of his persecution by Saul, when he wandred up and down in deserts, wildernesses, and solitudes, had under his fears, distresses, and exercise, great, holy, spiritual communion with God, as many of his psalms composed on such occasions do testify. And the greater his distresses were, the more fervent were his affections in all his addresses unto God. And he was never in greater, than when he escaped out of the cave of Adullam, and went thence unto Mizpeh of Moab, to get shelter for his parents, 1 Sam. xxii. 3. Then was he in the land of the Hermonites, the hill Hermon, being the boundary eastward of the Israelites possession next to Moab, Deut. iii. 8, 9. There no doubt David had a blessed exercise of his faith, and of all his affections towards God, wherein his soul found great refreshment. Being now in great distress and disconsolation of spirit, among other things under a sense that God hath forgotten him, ver. 9. He calls to mind the blessed experience he had of communion with God in the land of the Hermonites, wherein he now found support and refreshment. So, at other times, he called to remembrance the days of old, and in them his song

ſong in the night, or the ſweet refreſhment he had in ſpiritual converſe with God in former times. I have known one in the depth of diſtreſs and darkneſs of mind, who going, thro' temptation, to deſtroy himſelf, was relieved and delivered in the inſtant of ruin, by a ſudden rembrance that at ſuch a time, and in ſuch a place, he had prayed fervently with the engagement of all his affections unto God.

Wherefore you that are ſenſible of theſe decays, or ought ſo to be, take the advice of our Saviour, Remember whence you are fallen; call to mind the former days; conſider if it were not better with you than now; when in your lying down, and your riſing up, you had many thoughts of God, and of the things of God, and they were ſweet and precious unto your ſouls? when you rejoiced at the remembrance of his holineſs? When you had zeal for his glory, delight in his worſhip, and were glad when they ſaid, 'Let us go to the 'houſe of God together?' When you poured forth your ſouls with freedom, and enlarged affections before him, and were ſenſible of the viſits and refreſhments of his love? Remember what peace, what tranquility of mind, what joy you had whilſt it was ſo with you. And conſider what you have gotten ſince you have forſaken God, in any meaſure or degree. Dare to deal plainly with yourſelves. Is not all wherein you have now to do with God, either form, cuſtom, and ſelfiſhneſs, or attended with trouble, diſquietment, and fears? Do you truly know, either how to live, or how to die? Are you not ſome-

sometimes a terror unto yourselves? It must be so, unless you are hardened thro' the deceitfulness of sin. What have all your lovers done for you, that you have entertained in the room of God in Christ, and spiritual things? Speak plainly, have they not defiled you, wounded you, weakened you, and brought you into that condition, that you know not what you are, nor to whom ye do belong? What are your thoughts when you are most awake, when you are most yourselves? Do you not sometimes pant within yourselves, and say, O that it were with us as in former days.

And if you can be no way affected with the remembrance of former things; then one of these two great evils, you are certainly under. For either, 1. You never had a true and real work on your souls, whatever you professed; and so never had true and real communion with God in any duties. You had only a temporary work, which excited your affections for a season, which now it is worn off, leaves no sweet remembrance of itself upon your minds. Had your faith and love been sincere in what you did, it were impossible but that the remembrance of their actings in some especial instances, should be sweet and refreshing unto you. Or else, 2. You are hardened thro' the deceitfulness of sin, and there is no way left to give a sense or impression of spiritual things upon your minds. You have truly nothing left in religion, but the fear of hell, and trouble of duties. I speak not to such at present.

As unto those unto whom this frame is a burden;

den; there is no more effectual means to ſtir them unto endeavours for deliverance, than a continual remembrance of former things, and experiences they have had of holy intercourſe and communion with God. This will revive, quicken, and ſtrengthen the things that are ready to die, and beget a ſelf-abhorrency in them, in conſideration of that woful frame and temper of mind, which by their ſins and negligence they have brought themſelves into.

Secondly, Conſider that as there are many things dreadfully pronounced in the ſcripture againſt backſliding and backſliders in heart, as it is with you, yet alſo there are eſpecial calls and promiſes given and propoſed unto thoſe in your condition. And know aſſuredly, that upon your compliance or non-compliance with them, depends your everlaſting bleſſedneſs or woe.

Conſider both call and promiſe in that word of God's grace, Jer. iii. 12, 13, 14. 'Go and 'proclaim theſe words towards the north, and 'ſay, Return thou backſliding Iſrael, ſaith the 'Lord, and I will not cauſe mine anger to fall 'upon you; for I am merciful, ſaith the Lord, 'and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity that thou haſt tranſ'greſſed againſt the Lord thy God, and haſt ſcat'tered thy ways to the ſtrangers under every green 'tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, ſaith 'the Lord. Turn, O backſliding children, ſaith 'the Lord, for I am married unto you: and I 'will take you one of a city, and two of a family, 'and I will bring you to Zion.' Add thereunto

this blessed promise, Hos. xiv. 4. 'I will heal 'their backsliding, I will love them freely: for 'mine anger is turned away from them.' If you design to live, and not die, it must be by yielding obedience unto this call, and pleading this promise before God, mixing it with faith. Your return must be by the word, Isa. lvii. 18, 19. Here lies your great encouragement and direction, herein lieth your only relief. As you value your souls, defer not the duty you are called unto one moment. You know not how soon you may be without the reach of calls and promises. And he that can hear them without stirring up himself in sincerity to comply with them, hath made already a great progress towards that length.

Thirdly, As unto those who on these and the like considerations, do not only desire, but will endeavour also to retrieve themselves from this condition, I shall give no advice at present but this; be in good earnest. As the prophet speaks in another case; if you will return, return and come, make thorow work of it. You must do so at one time or another, or you will perish. Why not now? Why is not this the best season? Who knows but it may be the only time you will have for it? It were easy to multiply all sorts of arguments unto this purpose. Trifling endeavours, occasional resolutions and attempts, like the early cloud, and morning dew, shifting with warnings and convictions, by renewed duties until their impressions are worn out, will ruin your souls. Unless there be universal diligence and permanency in your endeavours, you are undone. Then shall

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ye know the Lord, if you follow on to know him.

But now to return. These things I say, thro' our sloth, negligence, and sin, may befal us, as unto our spiritually renewed affections. Their progress in conformity unto spiritual and heavenly things, may be slow, imperceptible, yea, totally obstructed for a season; and not only so, but they may fall under decays, and the soul therein be guilty of backsliding from God. But this is that which they are capacitated for by their renovation; this is that whereby the grace wherewith they are renewed doth lead unto; this is that which in the diligent use of means, they will grow up unto, whereon our comfort and peace do depend; namely, an holy assimulation unto those spiritual and heavenly things which they are set and fixed on, wherein they are renewed and made more spiritual and heavenly every day.

## CHAP. XVIII.

*The State of spiritual Affections, 1. In their Pattern. 2. In their Rule. 3. In their Measure.*

IT remains only as unto this head now spoken unto, that we briefly consider what is the state of spiritual affections thus daily exercised and improved. And this we shall do by shewing,

I. What is their pattern.

II. What is their rule.

III. What is their meaſure, or whereunto they may attain.

Firſt, The pattern which we ought continually to bear in our eyes, whereunto our affections ought to be conformed, is Jeſus Chriſt, and the affections of his holy ſoul. The mind is the ſeat of all our affections; and this is that we ought continually to deſign and endeavour, namely, that 'the ſame mind be in us, that was in Chriſt Jeſus,' Phil. ii. 5. To have our minds ſo affected with ſpiritual things, as was the mind of Chriſt, is the principal part of our duty and grace. Nor do I think that any man can attain any conſiderable degree in ſpiritual-mindedneſs, who is not much in the contemplation of the ſame mind in Chriſt, 2 Cor. iii. 18. To this purpoſe ought we to furniſh our minds with inſtances of the holy affections that were in Chriſt, and their bleſſed exerciſe on all occaſions. The ſcripture makes a full repreſentation of them unto us, and we ought to be converſant in our meditations on them. What glorious things are ſpoken of his love to God, and his delight in him, whence alſo he delighted to do his will, and his law was in the midſt of his bowels; Pſal. xl. 8. ſeated in the throne of his affections. What pity and compaſſion had he for the ſouls of men, yea, for the whole human kind, in all their ſufferings, pains, and diſtreſſes? How were all his affections always in perfection of order under the conduct of the ſpirit of his mind? Thence was his ſelf-denial, his contempt of the world, his readineſs for the croſs, to do or ſuffer

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according to the will of God. If this pattern be continually before us, it will put forth a transforming efficacy, to change us into the same image. When we find our minds liable unto any disorders, cleaving inordinately unto the things of this world, moved with intemperate passions, vain and frothy in conversation, darkened, or disturbed by the fumes of distempered lusts, let us call things to an account, and ask of ourselves, whether this be the frame of mind that was in Christ Jesus; this therefore is an evidence that our affections are spiritually renewed, and that they have received some progress in an assimulation unto heavenly things; namely, when the soul is delighted in making Christ their pattern in all things.

Secondly, The rule of our affections in their utmost spiritual improvement is the scripture. And two things are respected in them.

(1.) Their internal actings.

(2.) Their exercise in outward ways and means whereby they are expressed: Of them both the scripture is the entire rule. And with respect unto the former, it gives us one general law or rule that is comprehensive of all others; namely, that 'we love the Lord our God with all our hearts, 'souls, minds and strength.' The actings of all our affections towards God in the utmost degree of perfection is required of us; that, in all instances, we prefer and value him above all things; that we inseparably cleave unto him, and do nothing whatever, at any time, that is not influenced and directed by the love of God. This perfection,

as we ſhall ſee immediately, is not attainable abſolutely in this life; but it is propoſed unto us as that which the excellency of God's nature requires, and which the faculties and powers of our nature were created for, and which we ought in all things to deſign and aim at. But the indiſpenſible obligation of this rule is, that we ſhould always be in a ſincere endeavour to cleave unto God continually in all things, to prefer him above all, and delight in him as our chiefeſt good. When this frame and diſpoſition is habitually fixed in our minds, it will declare and act itſelf in all inſtances of duties, on all occaſions of tryal, when other things put in for a predominant intereſt in our affections, as they do every day. And if it be not ſo with us, we ſhall be at a continual loſs in all our ways. This is that which makes us lifeleſs and heartleſs in duties, careleſs in temptations, or occaſions of them, forgetful of God, when it is impoſſible we ſhould be preſerved from ſin without a due remembrance of his holineſs. In brief, the want of a predominant love unto God, kept in continual exerciſe, is the ſpring of all that unprofitable profeſſion of religion that the world is filled withal.

2dly, There are outward ways and duties whereby our ſpiritual affections are expreſſed. The rule of them alſo is the ſcripture. The way marked out therein, is the only channel wherein the ſtream of our ſpiritual affections doth take its courſe unto God. The graces required therein, are to act themſelves by; the duties it preſcribes, are thoſe which they ſtir up and enliven; the religious

ligious worſhip it appoints, is that wherein they have their exerciſe. Where this rule hath been neglected, mens religious affections have grown irregular, yea, wild and ungovernable. All the ſuperſtitions that the world is filled withal, owe their original principally unto mens affections ſet at looſe from the rule of the word. There is nothing ſo fond, abſurd, and fooliſh, but they have imbondaged the ſouls of men unto, nothing ſo horrid and difficult but they have engaged them in. And having once taken unto themſelves this liberty, the corrupt minds of men are a thouſand times more ſatisfied, than in the regular exerciſe of them according to the word of God. Hence they will rejoice in ſuch penances as are not without their auſterities; in ſuch outward duties of devotion, as are troubleſome and chargeable; in every thing that hath a ſhew of wiſdom in will-worſhip, and humility, and neglect of the body. Hence will all their affections be more ſenſibly moved by images and pictures, and a melting devotion be ſtirred up in them, than by all the motives and incentives which God propoſeth unto them, to draw their affections unto himſelf. Nothing is more extravagant than the affections of men, tinctured with ſome devotion, if they forſake the rule of the ſcripture.

Thirdly, There is conſiderable concerning them, the meaſure of their attainments, or what thro' due exerciſe and holy diligence they may be raiſed unto. Now this is not abſolute perfection. 'Not as tho' I had already attained, or were 'already perfect, but I follow after,' as the apoſtle

postle speaks, Phil. iii. 12. But there is that attainable, which those who pretend highly unto perfection, seem to be strangers unto. And the state of our affections under a due exercise on heavenly things, and in their assimulation unto them, may be fixed in these three things.

(1.) An habitual suitableness unto spiritual things, upon the proposal of them. The ways whereby spiritual things are proposed unto our minds are various. They are so directly in all ordinances of divine worship; they are so indirectly and in just consequence, by all the especial providences wherein we are concerned, by our own thoughts and stated meditations; they are so by the motions of the holy Spirit, when he causeth us to hear a word behind us saying, This is the way, walk in it; by holy converse with others; by all sorts of occurrences. And as the ways of their proposals are various, so the times and seasons wherein a representation of them is made unto us, are comprehensive of all, at least, are not exclusive of any times and seasons of our lives. Be the way of their proposal what it will, and when ever be the season of it, if our affections are duly improved by spiritual exercises, they are suited unto them, and will be ready to give them entertainment. Hence, or for want hereof, on the other hand, are tergiversations and shiftings in duties, proneness to comply with diversion, all to keep off the mind from closing with, and receiving of those spiritual things which it is not suited unto. Wherefore, as unto the solemn way of proposing spiritual things unto our minds, which

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is in and by the ordinances of divine worship, when men have a prevalent loathness to engage in them, or when they are satisfied with an outward attendance on them, but not enabled unto a vigorous stirring up of the inward man unto an holy affectionate converse with spiritual and heavenly things, it is because they are carnal. When men can receive the fiery darts of Satan in his temptations into their bosoms, and suffer them to abide there, yea, foster and cherish them in thoughts of the lusts that they kindle, but quickly quench the motions of the Spirit, stirring them up unto the embracing of heavenly things; they are carnal, and carnally-minded. When providences of concernment in afflictions, trials, deliverances, do not engage the mind into thoughts of spiritual things, and excite the affections unto the entertainment of them, men are carnal and earthly. When every lust, corruption, or passion, as anger, envy, displeasure at this or that person, or thing, can divert the mind from compliance with the proposal of spiritual things that is made unto it, we are carnal.

It is otherwise when our affections are conformed unto things spiritual and heavenly. Upon every proposal of this the mind finds a suitableness unto itself, like that which a well disposed appetite finds unto savoury meat. As the full soul loaths the hony comb, so a mind under the power of carnal affections, hath an aversation unto all spiritual sweetness. But spiritualized affections desire them, have an appetite unto them, readily receive them on all occasions, as those which are

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natural unto them, as milk is unto new-born babes.

(2.) Affections ſo diſpoſed conſtantly, find a guſt, a pleaſant taſte, a reliſh in ſpiritual things. They do in them taſte that the Lord is gracious, 1 Pet. ii. 3. To taſte of God's goodneſs, is to have an experience of a ſavoury reliſh and ſweetneſs, in converſe and communion with him. And perſons whoſe affections are thus renewed, and thus improved do taſte a ſweet ſavour in all ſpiritual things. Some of them, as a ſenſe of the love of Chriſt, are ſometimes as it were too hard for them, and overpower them, until they are ſick of love, and do rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory. Neither is there any of them however condited with afflictions or mortifications, but it is ſweet unto them, Prov. xxvii. 7. Every thing that is wholſome food, that is good nouriſhment, tho' it be but bitter herbs, is ſweet to him that is hungry. And when by our affections we have raiſed up in us a ſpiritual appetite unto heavenly things, however any of them in their own nature, or in their diſpenſation, may be bitter to fleſh and blood, as are all the doctrines of the croſs, they are all ſweet unto us, and we can taſte how gracious the Lord is in them. When the ſoul is filled with earthly things, the love of this world, or when the appetite is loſt by ſpiritual ſickneſs, or vitiated and corrupted by any prevalent ſin, heavenly things are unſavoury and ſapleſs, or as Job ſpeaks, like the white of an egg wherein there is no taſte. There may be in the diſpenſation of the word, a taſte or pleaſing reliſh given unto the fancy;

fancy; there may be so unto the notional understanding, when the affections find no complacency in the things themselves. But unto them who are spiritually-minded unto the degree intended, they are all sweet, savoury, pleasant; the affections taste them immediately, as the palate doth meat.

(3.) They are a just repository of all graces, and therein the treasury of the soul. There are graces of the Spirit whose formal direct residence is in the understanding and the will, as faith itself. And therein are all other graces radically comprized, they grow from that root. Howbeit the most of them have their principal residence in the affections. In them are they preserved secure and ready for exercise on all occasions. And when they are duly spiritual, there is nothing that tends to their growth or improvement, to their cherishing or quickening, which they stand in need of continually, and which God hath made provision for in his word, but they readily receive it, lay it up, keep and preserve it. Hereby they come to be filled with grace, with all graces; for there is room in them for all the graces of the Spirit to inhabit; and do readily comply with the light and direction of faith unto their exercise. When faith discerns and determines that there is any thing to be done or suffered, in a way of duty, unto the glory of God, the affections thus disposed, do not shut up or stifle the graces that are in them, but chearfully offer them unto their proper exercise.

There are some of those things, which our affections conformed unto heavenly things, will attain unto. And thus it is with affections spiritually renewed,

newed, by being fixed on things ſpiritual and heavenly, they are more and more conformed unto them, made like them, and become more ſpiritual and heavenly themſelves.

It is not thus with them whoſe affections have only an occaſional change wrought upon them by the means before deſcribed, but are not ſpiritually renewed. Yea, on the contrary, ſuch perſons do deſign to debate ſpiritual things, to bring down heavenly things into a conformity with their affections, which however changed, are not ſpiritual, but carnal. To evince this, we may obſerve.

(1.) Theſe affections are under the light and conduct of ſuch notions in the mind and underſtanding, as do not give a clear diſtinct repreſentation of them in their own nature unto them. For where they are not themſelves ſpiritually renewed, there the mind itſelf is carnal and unrenewed. And ſuch a mind diſcerneth not the things of God, nor can do ſo, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned. They cannot be diſcerned aright in their own beauty and glory, but in and by a ſpiritual ſaving light which the mind is devoid of. And where they are not thus repreſented, the affections cannot receive, or cleave unto them as they ought, nor will ever be conformed unto them.

(2.) Thoſe notions, in ſuch perſons, are oft-times variouſly influenced and corrupted by fancy and imagination. They are merely puffed up in their fleſhly minds; that is, they are filled with vain, fooliſh, proud imaginations about ſpiritual things, as the apoſtle declares, Col. ii. 18, 19. And the work of fancy in a fleſhly mind, is to raiſe

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up such images of spiritual things, as may render them suitable unto natural unrenewed affections.

(3.) This in the progress of it, produceth superstition, false worship, and idolatry. For they are all of them an attempt to represent spiritual things in a way suited unto carnal unrenewed affections; hence men suppose themselves to be excited by them unto love, joy, fear, delight, in the things themselves, when they all respect that false representation of them, whereby they are suited unto them as carnal. These have been the spring of all false worship and idolatry in the Christian world.

First, The mind and affections have been changed and tinctured with devotion by some of the means we have before insisted on. Herein they will one way or other be exercised about spiritual things, and are ready to receive impressions from any thing that superstition can impose upon them.

Secondly, They are by error and false information, set at liberty from the only rule of their actings and exercise, that is the word of God. Men satisfied themselves, that so their affections were engaged about things spiritual and heavenly, it was no matter at all, whether the way of their exercise was directed by the scripture or no. Having thus lost their guide and their way, every *Ignis Fatuus*, every wandring meteor, allures them to follow its conduct into foolish superstitions. Nothing almost is so ridiculous, nothing so horrid and difficult, that they will not embrace under the notion of things spiritual and heavenly.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The carnal minds of men, having no proper distinct apprehensions and notions of spiritual things in their own nature, do endeavour to represent them under such notions and images as may suit them unto their carnal unrenewed affections. For it is implanted almost indelibly upon them, that the end of all knowledge of spiritual things is to propose them unto the embraces of the affections. It were easy to manifest that from these three corrupt springs, arose that flood of idolatry and false worship which spread itself over the church of Rome, and with whose machinations the minds of men are yet too much replenished.

Fourthly, Where it is not thus, yet carnal affections do variously debase spiritual things, to bring them into a conformity with themselves. And this may proceed so far, until men think wickedly, that God is altogether like unto them. But I shall not insist on these things any farther.

Lastly, Where affections are spiritually renewed, the person of Christ is the center of them, but where they are changed only, they tend unto and end in self. Where the new man is put on, Christ is all in all, Col. iii. 10, 11. He is the spring, by his spirit, that gives them life, light, and being; and he is the ocean that receives all their streams. God, even the Father presents not himself in his beauty and amiableness as the object of our affections, but as he is in Christ, acting his love in him, 1 John iv. 8, 9. And as unto all other spiritual things, renewed affections cleave unto them, according as they derive from Christ, and

and lead unto him; for he is unto them all and in all. It is he whom the souls of his saints do love for himself, for his own sake, and all other things of religion in and for him. The air is pleasant and useful, that without which we cannot live or breathe. But if the sun did not enlighten it, and warm it with its beams, if it were always one perpetual night, and cold, what refreshment could be received by it? Christ is the sun of righteousness, and if his beams do not quicken, animate and enlighten, the best, the most necessary duties of religion, nothing desirable would remain in them. This is the most certain character of affections spiritually renewed. They can rest in nothing but in Christ; they fix on nothing but what is amiable by a participation of his beauty, and in whatever he is, therein do they find complacency. It is otherwise with them whose affections may be changed, but are not renewed. The truth is, and it may be made good by all sorts of instances, that Christ in the mystery of his person, and in the glory of his mediation, are the only things that they dislike in religion. False representations of him by images and pictures they may embrace, and delight in false notions of his present glory; greatness and power, may affect them; a worship of their own devising they may give unto him, and please themselves in it. Corrupt opinions concerning his office and grace, may possess their minds, and they may contend for them; but those who are not spiritually renewed, cannot love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; yea, they have an inward secret aversation from the mystery of his person

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and his grace. It is ſelf which all their affections center in, the ways whereof are too long here to be declared.

This is the firſt thing that is required to render our affections in ſuch a ſtate and condition, as that from and by them we may be ſpiritually-minded, namely, That they themſelves are ſpiritually and ſavingly renewed.

The things that remain will admit of a ſpeedy diſpatch as I ſuppoſe.

## CHAP. XIX.

*The Object about which Affections ſpiritually-renewed, are converſant, and whereunto they do adhere.*

THE ſecond thing required that we may be ſpiritually-minded, as unto the intereſt of our affections therein, is the object of them about which they are converſant, and whereunto they do adhere. What this is materially, or what are the ſpiritual things which our affections are to be ſet upon, hath been declared already under the conſideration of the object of our thoughts and meditations, for they are the ſame. Yea, as hath been intimated, the fixing of our affections upon them, is the ſpring and cauſe of our thoughts about them. But that which we ſhall now enquire into, is the true notion and conſideration of ſpiritual and heavenly things, which renders them the formal proper object of ſpi-

spiritual affections, and is the reason of their adherence unto them. For, as was intimated before, men may have false notions of spiritual things, under which they may like them and embrace them with unrenewed affections. Wherefore, we shall enquire into some of those considerations of heavenly things, under which affections spiritually renewed do satisfactorily cleave unto them with delight and complacency.

I. And the first is, that as they comprehend God in Christ, and all other things, as deriving from him, and tending unto him, they have an infinite beauty, goodness, and amiableness in them, which are powerfully attractive of spiritual affections, and which alone are able to fill them, to satisfy them, to give them rest and acquiescency. Love is the most ruling and prevalent affection in the whole soul. But it cannot be fixed on any object, without an apprehension true or false, of an amiableness and desirableness in it from a suitable goodness unto all its desires.

And our fear so far as it is spiritual, hath divine goodness for its object, Hos. iii. 5. Unless this be that which draws our hearts unto God, and the things of God, in all pretence of love unto him, men do but frame idols to themselves according to their own understanding, as the prophet speaks, Hos. xiii. 2. Wherefore that our affections may cleave unto spiritual things in a due manner, three things are required.

First, That we apprehend, and do find a goodness, a beauty, and thence an amiableness and desirableness in them, Zech. ix. 17. Many pretend

to love God and spiritual things, but they know not why. Why they love other things they know well enough, but why they love God they cannot tell. Many are afraid of him, and suppose they ought to love him, and therefore pretend so to do, tho' indeed they know they do not, they do but flatter him with their lips, when their hearts are far from him. Some are much affected with the benefits and mercies they receive from him, and suppose that they love him on that account. But this love is no other but what the devil falsely charged Job withal, Chap. i. 8, 9, 10, 11. Some have delight in the outward modes and rites of divine worship, wherewith they satisfy themselves that they love God and spiritual things, when they only please their own imaginations and carnal minds. Many have a traditional apprehension that they ought to love God, they know no reason why they should not, they know it will be ill for them if they do not, and these take it for granted that they do. How few are there, who have that spiritual discerning and apprehension of the divine excellencies, that view of the excellency of the goodness and love of God in Christ, as thereby alone to be drawn after him, and to delight in him, yet is this the ground of all sincere real love unto God. Two things are required that we may apprehend an amiable goodness in any thing, and cleave unto it with sincere affection.

1st, A real worth or excellency in itself.

2dly, A suitableness therein unto our condition, state, and desires after rest and blessedness. The

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first of these is in God, from what he is in himself; the latter is from what he is unto us in Christ; from both he is the only suitable object unto our affections. Under this apprehension do we love God for himself, or for his own sake; not exclusively unto our own advantage therein. For a desire of union and enjoyment, which is our only advantage, is inseparable from this love.

It may be some cannot say, that a distinct apprehension of these things, was the first foundation and cause of their love to God; yet are they satisfied that they do love him in sincerity with all their souls. And I say, it may be so. God sometimes casts the skirt of his own love, over the heart of a poor sinner, and efficaciously draws it unto himself, without a distinct apprehension of these things by a mere sense of the love it hath received. So Elijah passed by Elisha, and cast his mantle upon him as a transient act: But there was such a communication of virtue thereby, that he ran after him, and would not be deferred, tho' Elijah said, 'Go back again, for what 'have I done unto thee?' 1 Kings xix. 19, 20. When God hath so cast his love on any soul, it follows after him with all its affections. And whereas God may seem at some times to say, Go back again, for what have I done unto thee; its answer is, Lord, whither shall I go, I cannot leave thee, my heart is given up unto thee, and shall never be taken from thee.

But I say unto such, and to all others, that if we would have refreshing evidences of our love unto God, that it is sincere, if we would have it

thrive and flourish, be fervent and constant, we are to exercise ourselves unto the contemplation of the divine goodness, and the suitableness of it unto our souls in and by Jesus Christ. Nor can we cleave unto any spiritual things whatever, with sincere affections, but under those notions of it.

1. That it hath a real worth or excellency in itself.

2. That it is suitable and desireable unto us. And it is to be bewailed to see how many walk at random in profession, that know neither what they do, nor where they go.

Secondly, As we must see a goodness and probableness in spiritual things absolutely, so as that we may fix our affections on them in a due manner, so we must see it comparatively with respect unto all other things, which gives them a preference in our affections before and above them all. The tryal of love lies in the prevailing degree; on more or less. If we love other things, father, mother, houses, lands, possessions more than Christ, we do not love him at all. Nor is there any equality allowed in this matter, that we may equally love temporal and spiritual things. If we love not Christ more than all those things, we love him not at all. Wherefore that our affections may cleave unto them in a due manner, we must see an excellency in things spiritual and heavenly, rendering them more desirable than all other things whatever.

With what loving countenances do men look upon their temporal enjoyments; with what tenacious embraces do they cleave unto them?

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They ſee that in them which is amiable, which is deſirable and ſuitable unto their affections. Let them pretend what they pleaſe, if they ſee not a greater goodneſs, that which is more amiable, more deſireable in ſpiritual things, they love them not in a due manner; it is temporal things that hath the rule of their affections. Our Pſalmiſt prefers Jeruſalem before his chiefeſt joy, Pſal. cxxxvii. 6. Another affirms that the 'law of God's 'mouth was better to him than thouſands of gold 'and ſilver,' Pſal. cxix. 72. More to be deſired are the 'ſtatutes of the Lord than gold, yea, 'than much fine gold, ſweeter alſo than honey, 'or the honey-comb,' Pſal. xix. 10. For 'wiſdom 'is better than rubies, and all things that may 'be deſired are not to be compared unto it,' Prov. viii. 11. This is the only ſtable foundation of all divine affections. A ſpiritual view and judgment of a goodneſs, an excellency in them, incomparably above whatever is in the moſt deſirable things of this world are required thereunto. And if the affections of many pretending highly to them, ſhould come to be weighed in this ballance, I fear they would be found light and wanting. However it is the duty of them who would not be deceived in this matter, which is of eternal importance, to examine what is that goodneſs and excellency which is in ſpiritual things, which they deſire in them, upon the account whereof they do ſincerely value and eſteem them above all things in this world whatever. And let not any deceive themſelves with vain words and pretences whilſt their eſteem and valuation of pre-

sent enjoyments, doth evidently engage all their affections, their care, their diligence, their industry, so as that a man of a discerning spirit may even feel them turned into self, whilst they are cold, formal, negligent about spiritual things, we must say, 'How dwelleth the love of God 'in them?' Much more when we see men not only giving up the whole of their time and strength, with the vigour of their spirits, but sacrificing their consciences also unto the attaining of dignities, honours, preferments, wealth, and ease in the world, who know in their own hearts that they perform religious duties with respect unto temporal advantages, I cannot conceive how it is possible they should discern and approve of a goodness and excellency in spiritual things, above all others.

A due consideration is required hereunto, that all spiritual things do proceed from, and are resolved into an infinite fountain of goodness, so as that our affections may absolutely come unto rest and complacency, and find full assured satisfaction in them. It is otherwise as unto all temporal things. Men would very fain have them to be such, as might give absolute rest and satisfaction unto all their affections. But they are every one of them so far from it, that all of them together cannot compose their minds in rest and peace for one hour. They gain sometimes a transport of affections, and seem for a season to have filled the whole soul, so as it hath no leasure to consider their emptiness and vanity. But a little composure of mens thoughts, shew that they are but a di-

diversion in a journey or labour, they are no rest. Hence are they called broken cisterns that will hold no water. Let a man prize them at the highest rate that it is possible for a rational creature to be seduced into the thoughts of, whereof there have been prodigious instances; let him possess them in abundance beyond whatever any man enjoyed in this world, or his own imagination could before hand reach unto; let him be assured of the utmost peaceable continuance in the enjoyment of them, that his and their natures are capable of; yet would he not dare to pretend, that all his affections were filled and satisfied with them, that they afforded him perfect rest and peace. Should he do so, the working of his mind every day would convince him of his falsehood and his folly.

But all spiritual things derive from, and lead unto that which is infinite, which is therefore able to fill all our affections, and to give them full satisfaction with rest and peace. They all lead us to the fountain of living waters, the eternal spring of goodness and blessedness.

I do not say that our affections do attain unto this full rest and satisfaction in this life. But what they come short of therein, ariseth from any defect in the things themselves to give this rest and satisfaction, as it is with the whole world; but from the weakness of our affections themselves which are in part only renewed, and cannot take in the full measures of divine goodness, which in another world they will. But whilst we are here, the more we receive them into our minds

and souls, the more firmly we adhere unto them, the nearer approaches we make unto our rest and center.

II. Spiritual things are to be considered as they are filled with divine wisdom. I speak not of himself whose essential wisdom is one of the most amiable excellencies of his holy nature; but of all the effects of his will and grace by Jesus Christ. All spiritual truths, all spiritual and heavenly things whereby God reveals and communicates himself unto the souls of men, and all the ways and means of our approach unto him in faith and obedience thro' Christ Jesus, I now intend. All these are filled with divine wisdom, see 1 Cor. ii. 7. Eph. iii. 10. chap. i. 8, 9. Now wisdom in itself, and in all the effects of it, is attractive of rational affections. Most men are brutish in them and their actings, for the most part, pouring them out on things fleshly, sensual and carnal. But where they are at all reduced under the conduct of reason, nothing is so attractive of them, so suited unto them, which they delight in, as that which hath at least an appearance of wisdom. A wise and good man doth command the affections of others, unless it be their interest to hate and oppose him, as commonly it is. And where there is true wisdom in the conduct of civil affairs, sober men cannot but approve of it, like it, delight in it, and men of understanding do bewail the loss of it, since craft, falsehood, treachery, and all sorts of villany have driven it out of the world. So is divine wisdom attractive of divine gracious affections. The Psalmist declares his admiration of,

of, and delight in the works of God, becauſe he hath made them all in wiſdom, Pſalm civ. 24. Thoſe characters of divine wiſdom which are upon them, which they are filled with, draw the ſouls of men into a delightful contemplation of them. But all the treaſures, all the glory of his wiſdom, are laid up, and laid forth, in the great ſpiritual things of the goſpel, in the myſtery of God in Chriſt, and the diſpenſation of his grace and goodneſs unto us by him. The conſideration hereof fills the ſouls of believers with holy admiration and delight, and thereon they cleave unto them with all their affections. When we ſee there is light in them, and all other things are in darkneſs, that wiſdom is in them, in them alone, and all other things are filled with vanity and folly, then are our ſouls truely affected with them, and do rejoice in them with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

Unto the moſt, this wiſdom of God is fooliſhneſs. It was ſo of old as the apoſtle teſtifieth, 1 Cor. i. 23. And ſo it continues yet to be. And therefore is the myſtery of the goſpel deſpiſed by them; they can ſee neither form nor comlineſs in it for which it ſhould be deſired. Nor will ever any man have ſincere ſpiritual affections unto ſpiritual things, who hath not a ſpiritual view of the wiſdom of God in them.

This is that which attracts our ſouls by holy admiration unto unſpeakable delight. And the reaſon why men do ſo generally decline from any love unto the goſpel, and loſe all ſatisfaction in the myſtery of it, is becauſe they are not able to

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discern that infinite wisdom which is the spring, life, and soul of it. When our minds are raised unto the admiration of this wisdom in divine revelations, then will our affections cleave unto the things that are revealed.

III. The acting of our affections in their adherence unto spiritual things is perfective of our present state and condition. That which of all other things doth most debase the nature of man, wherein it makes the nearest approaches unto brutality, yea, whereby it becomes in some respects more vile than the nature of beasts, is the giving up of the affections unto things sensual, unclean, base, and unworthy of its more noble principles. Hence are men said to debase themselves unto hell, Isaiah lvii. 9. And their affections do become vile; so as that their being under the power of them, is an effect of revenging justice punishing men for the worst of sins, Rom. i. 26. There is nothing more vile, nothing more contemptible, nothing more like to beasts in baseness, and to hell in punishment, than is the condition of them who have enslaved their nature unto brutish sensual affections. I say vile affections fixed on, and cleaving unto sensual objects, do debase the nature of man, and do both corrupt and enslave all the more noble faculties of it; the very consciences and minds of men are defiled by them. If you see a man whose affections are set inordinately on any thing here below, it is easy to discern how he goes off from his native worth, and debaseth himself therein.

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But the fixing of spiritual affections on spiritual objects is perfective of our present state and condition. Not that we can attain perfection by it; but that therein our souls are in a progress towards perfection. This may be granted; look how much vile affections fixed on, and furiously pursuing things carnal and sensual, do debase our natures beneath its rational constitution, and make it degenerate into bestiality; so much spiritual affections fixed on, and cleaving unto things spiritual and heavenly, do exalt our nature above its meer natural capacity, making an approach unto the state of angels, and of just men made perfect. And as brutish affections when they have the reins, as they say, on their necks, and are pursued with delight and greediness, do darken the mind, and disturb all the rational powers of the soul, (for whoredom, and wine, and new wine do take away the heart, as the prophet speaks, and wickedness altereth the understanding.) So holy affections fixed on spiritual things, do elevate, raise, and enlighten the mind with true wisdom and understanding. For the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from iniquity, that is understanding. And again, As the power of vile affections fill the soul and conscience with tumult, disorder, fear, and shame where men are not utterly profligate, so as that the minds, thoughts, and consciences of persons under their power, is a very hell for confusion and troubles; so spiritual affections duly exercised on their proper objects, do preserve all things in order in the whole soul, they are life and peace. All things are quiet and

and secure in the mind, there is order and peace in the whole soul, in all its faculties, and all their operations, whilst the affections are in a due prevailing manner fixed upon the things that are above. Hence many persons after great turmoilings in the world, after they have endeavoured by all means to come to rest and satisfaction therein, have utterly renounced all concernments in earthly things, and betaken themselves unto the contemplation of things above, and that only. Many I confess of them were mistaken as to the practical part of their devotions, having various superstitions imposed on their minds by the craft of others; but they missed it not in the principle, that tranquility of mind was attainable only in setting our affections upon things above, Jam. iv. 1. 'From whence come wars and fightings among 'you, come they not hence, even of your lusts 'that war in your members.' Whence are all the disorders in your minds, your vexations and disquietments, your passions breaking forth sometimes unto unseemly brawlings? are they not from hence? The question is put unto yourselves, and your own consciences, namely, From your lusts, that is the disorderly affections that tumultuate in you: Do but search yourselves, and you will quickly see whence all your troubles and disquietments do arise. Your lusts, or corrupt and inordinate affections do war in you, continually inclining you to things earthly or sensual. Hence many are best and most at quiet when they are in the world, worst when at home in their

their families; but never are they in such confusion, as when they are forced to retire into themselves.

The due exercise of our affections on heavenly things, hath quite another tendency and effect. It so unites the mind unto them, it so bringeth them unto it, and gives them such a subsistence in it, as that all the powers and faculties of it are in a progress towards their perfection, see 2 Cor. vii. 1. True wisdom and understanding with soundness of judgment, in eternal things, in the mind, holiness in the affections themselves, liberty in the will, power in the heart, and peace in the conscience, do in their measures all ensue hereon. Whatever tastes we may have of these things, whatever temporary experience we have of them, they will not flourish in us, they will not abide with us in any constancy, unless we are thus spiritually-minded.

IV. In the future enjoyment of the present object of our spiritual affections, doth our eternal blessedness consist. All men who are convinced of a future eternal condition, do desire when they depart hence to enter in blessedness and glory. Howbeit what that blessedness, even as unto the general nature of it, is, they know nothing at all; and if they did, they would not know how to desire it. For heaven or blessedness, is nothing but the full enjoyment of what we are here to love and delight in above all, of that which is the object of our affections as spiritually renewed. Herein have they neither interest nor concern. But this is that which giveth life unto the affections

tions of believers; they know that in the enjoyment of God in Christ, their eternal blessedness doth consist. How this is their happiness and glory, how it will give them an everlasting overflowing satisfaction and rest, they understand in the first fruits of it which they here receive. And this is the ultimate object of their affections in this world, and they go forth unto all other spiritual things in order thereunto. The more therefore their affections are fixed on them, the more they are kept up unto that due exercise, the nearer approaches they make unto this blessed state. When their minds are possessed with this persuasion, when it is confirmed in them by daily experience of that sweetness, rest and satisfaction which they find in cleaving unto God with fervent love and delight, in vain shall any other objects rise up in competition to draw them off unto themselves. The more we love God, the more like we are unto him, and the more near the enjoyment of him.

## CHAP. XX.

*The Way how the Soul applies itself, by its Affections, unto those objects, which belong unto our being spiritually-minded.*

HAVING considered the nature of spiritual affections as renewed by grace, and those notions of their objects under which they cleave unto them, it remains only that we inquire into the

the way of the soul's application of itself unto those objects by its affections, which belong also unto our being spiritually-minded. And I shall give an account hereof in some few particulars, with brief observations on them.

First, It is required that our adherence unto all spiritual things with love and delight, be firm and stable. The affections are the powers and instruments of the soul whereby it makes application unto any thing without itself, and cleaves unto it. This is their nature and use with reference unto things spiritual. Transient thoughts of spiritual things, with vanishing desires, may rise out of present convictions, as they did with them who cried out unto our Saviour, 'Lord, 'give us evermore of this bread,' and immediately left him. Such occasional thoughts and desires are common unto all sorts of men, yea, the worst of them, 'Let me die the death of the 'righteous, and let my end be as his.' Fading satisfaction with joy and delight, do often befal men in their attendance on the word, who yet never come to have it rooted in their hearts.

There are sundry things wanting unto the sincerity of these affections.

(1.) Those in whom they are, never had a clear spiritual view of the things themselves, in their own nature, which they pretend to be affected withal.

(2.) They have not a sincere love unto them, and delight in them, for their own sakes, but are only affected with some outward circumstances and concernments of them.

(3.) They

(3.) They find not a ſuitableneſs in them unto the ruling principles of their minds. They do not practically, they cannot truly ſay, the yoke of Chriſt is eaſy, and his burden is light; his commandments are not grievous; or with the Pſalmiſt, O! how do I love thy law.

(4.) Their affections are tranſient, unſtable, vaniſhing, as unto their exerciſe and operations. They are on and off, now pleaſed, and anon diſpleaſed; earneſt for a little while, and then cold and indifferent. Hence the things which they ſeem to effect, have no transforming efficacy upon their ſouls; they dwell not in them, in their power.

But where our affections unto ſpiritual things are ſincere, where they are the true genuine application of the ſoul, and adherence unto them, they are firm and ſtable; love and delight are kept up unto ſuch a conſtant exerciſe, as renders them immoveable, this is that which we are exhorted unto, 1 Cor. xv. 58. 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' Tranſient affections with their occaſional operations, deceive multitudes, oft-times they are pregnant in their actings, as thoſe that are moſt ſincere: and many effects in joys, in mournings, in complaints, they will produce, eſpecially when excited by any outward affliction, ſickneſs, and the like. But their goodneſs is like the early cloud, or morning dew. Let none therefore pleaſe themſelves with the operations of tranſient affections with reſpect unto

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pleaſure, or ſo [illegible] their ſeaſons, [illegible]
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Secondly, That the ſoul do find a ſpiritual reliſh and ſavour in the things which it ſo adheres unto. The affections are the palate of the ſoul, whereby it taſtes of all things which it receiveth or refuſeth; and it will not long cleave unto any thing which they find not a ſavour and reliſh in. Something was ſpoken before of that ſweetneſs which is in ſpiritual things; and the taſte of them conſiſts in a gracious ſenſe of their ſuitableneſs unto the affections, inclinations and diſpoſitions of the mind. Hence they have no reliſh unto men of carnal minds. Whoever therefore would know whether his affections do ſincerely adhere unto ſpiritual things, let him examine what reliſh, what ſweetneſs, what ſavour he findeth in them. When he is pleaſed with them as the palate with ſuitable and proper food, when he finds that he receives nouriſhment by them in the inward man; then doth he adhere unto them in a due manner.

This ſpiritual taſte is the ground of all experience, it is not what we have heard or underſtood only, but what we have tryed and taſted, whereof we have experience. This makes us long for what we have formerly enjoyed, and ſtrengthens faith, as unto what we pray for and expect.

In every darkneſs, in every damp of ſpirit, under every apprehenſion of deadneſs, or the withdrawing of the ſenſe of divine love, the ſoul knows what it wants, and what it doth deſire.

Oh! faith such an one, that it were now with me as in former days; I know he who then gave me such refreshing tastes of his own goodness, who made every thing of himself sweet and pleasant unto me, can renew this work of his grace towards me; he can give me a new spiritual appetite and relish, and he can make all spiritual things savoury unto me again.

As a man under a languishing sickness, or when he is chastened with strong pain, so as that his soul abhorreth bread, and his daily meat; can remember what appetite he had, with what gust and relish he was wont to take in his food in the days of his health, which makes him to know that there is such a condition, and to desire a return unto it: So it is with a sin-sick soul; it can find no relish, no gust, no sweetness in spiritual things, he finds no savour in the bread of the word, nor any refreshment in the ordinances of the gospel, which yet in themselves are daily meat, 'a feast of fat 'things, and of wine well refined.' Yet doth it remember former days, when all these things were sweet unto him. And if he have any spark of spiritual life yet remaining, it will stir him up to seek with all diligence after a recovery. How is it with you who are now under spiritual decays; who find no taste or relish in spiritual things; unto whom the word is not savoury, nor other ordinances powerful? call to mind how it hath been with you in former days; and what you found in these things; 'if so be,' saith the apostle, 'that 'you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' If you have not, it is to be feared that you have ne-

ver yet had the least sincere love unto spiritual things; for where that is, it will give a spiritual relish of them. If you have, how is it you can give yourselves rest one moment, without an endeavour after the healing of your backsliding.

Thirdly, It is required that our affections be set on spiritual things, so as to be a continual spring of spiritual thoughts and meditations. No man can be so forsaken of reason, as to suppose that he hath any sincere affections for what he thinks little on, or not at all; or that he can have a true affection for any thing which will not stir up and ingenerate in him continual thoughts about it. Let men try themselves as unto their relations, or their enjoyments, or the objects of their predominant lusts, and they will find how things are stated in their own minds. And therefore, whereas all men pretend to love God and Christ, and the ways of God, and yet know in their own hearts, that they little think on them, or meditate upon them, both their pretence and religion is vain. Where our affections are duly placed on heavenly things, so as that we are indeed spiritual-minded, they will be a constant spring of spiritual thoughts and meditation. But this also hath been before spoken unto.

Fourthly, When our affections are thus applied unto spiritual things, they will be prevalent and victorious against sollicitations unto the contrary, or allurements to draw them off unto any other objects. The work of all our spiritual adversaries, is to sollicite and tempt our affections, to divert them from their proper object. These are some temp-

temptations of Satan that make an immediate impression on the mind and conscience. Such are his injection of diabolical blasphemous thoughts concerning God, his being, nature, and will, and the distresses which he reduceth men unto in their consciences, thro' darkness, and misrepresentations of God and his goodness. But the high road and constant practice of all our spiritual adversaries, is by the sollicitation of our affections unto objects that are in themselves, or in the degree of our affections towards them, evil and sinful. Of the first, are all sensual pleasures of the flesh, in drunkenness, uncleanness, gluttony, chambering, and wantonness, with all sorts of sensual pleasures. Of the latter is all our inordinate love unto self, our families, and the whole world, or the things of it. Unto this end, every thing in the whole world, that may make provision for lust, is made use of. Herein consists the nature and efficacy of most of those temptations which we have to conflict withal. Sollicitations they are of our affections to draw them off from things spiritual and heavenly, and to divert them unto other things. Hereby do our enemies endeavour to beguile us, as the serpent beguiled Eve; with fair and false representations of other beloveds, that our hearts be not preserved, as a chast virgin, in all their affections for Christ.

And it is almost incredible how apt we are to be beguiled by the specious pretences wherewith we are sollicited.

That our affections in the degree treated about, suppose of love unto the world and the things of it,

it, are lawful and allowable, is one of the sophisms and artifices wherewith many are deluded. Hereon, provided they run not out into scandalous excesses, they approve of themselves in such a worldly frame of mind, and acting according unto it, as renders them fruitless, useless, senseless, and is inconsistent with that prevailing adherence of affections unto spiritual things, that ought to be in us. Others are deluded by a pretence, that it is in one instance only they would be spared, it is but this or that object, they would give out the embraces of their affections unto, in all other things they will be entire for God; the vanity of which pretence we have spoken unto before. Others are ruined by giving place unto their sollicitations, with respect unto any one affection whatever. As suppose it be that of fear. In times of danger for profession, multitudes have lost all their affections unto spiritual things, thro' a fear of losing that which is temporal, as their lives, their liberties, their goods, and the like. When, once Satan or the world have gotten, as it were, the mastery of this affection, or a prevalent interest in it, they will not fail to draw all others into a defection from Christ and the gospel. He that loves his life shall lose it.

Wherefore, it is no ordinary nor easy thing to preserve our affections pure, entire and steady, in their vigorous adherence unto spiritual things, against all these sollicitations. Watchfulness, prayer, faith in exercise, and a daily examination of ourselves are required hereunto. For want of a due attendance unto these things, and that with

respect unto this end, namely, the preservation of our spiritual affections in their integrity; many, even before they are aware, die away as to all power and vigour of spiritual life.

Fifthly, Affections thus fixed upon things spiritual and heavenly, will give great relief against the remainders of that vanity of mind which believers themselves are oft-times perplexed withal. Yea, I do not know any thing that is a greater burden unto them, nor which they more groan for deliverance from. The instability of the mind, its readiness to receive impressions from things vain and useless, the irregularity of their thoughts, are a continual burden unto many. Nothing can give the soul any relief herein, nothing can give bounds unto the endless vanity of foolish imaginations, nothing can dry up the springs from whence they arise, or render the soil wherein they grow, barren, as unto their production and maintainance, but only the growth of spiritual affections, with their continual vigorous actings on heavenly things. For hereby the heart and mind will be so united unto them, (that which the Psalmist prays for, Psalm lxxxvi. 11.) as that they will not be ready to depart from them, and give entertainment unto vain, empty, foolish imaginations. Thoughts of other things, greater and better than what this world can contain, will be continually arising in the mind, not to be laid aside by any follicitations of vanity. For he that is wise, cannot but know and consider, that the spiritual things which it exerciseth its thoughts about, have substance in them, are durable, profi-

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abide always the same; that the advantage, peace, rest, riches, and reward of the soul lieth in them; but other imaginations which the foolish mind is apt to give entertainment unto, are vain, empty, fruitless, and such as end in shame and trouble.

Again, The vanity of the mind in an indulgence unto foolish imaginations ariseth from, or is animated and encreased by that gust and relish which it finds in earthly things, and enjoyments of them, whether lawful or unlawful. Hence on all occasions, yea, in holy duties, it will be ready to turn aside, and take a taste of them, and sometimes to take up with them; like a tippling traveller, who tho' he be engaged in a journey on the most earnest occasion, yet he cannot but be bibbing here and there as he passes by, and it may be, at length, before he comes to his journeys end, lodgeth himself in a nasty ale-house. When men are engaged in important duties, yet if they always carry about them, a strong gust and relish of earthly things, they will ever and anon in their thoughts divert unto them, either as unto such real objects as they are accustomed unto, or as unto what present circumstances do administer unto corrupt affections, or as to what they fancy and create in their own minds. And sometimes, it may be, after they have made them a few short or visits, they take up with them, and lose wholly the work they were engaged in. Nothing, as was said, will give relief herein, but the vigorous and constant exercise of our affections on heavenly things. For this will insensibly take off that gust and relish which the mind hath found

in things present, earthly and sensual, and make them as a sapless thing unto the whole soul. They will so place the cross of Christ in particular on the heart, as that the world shall be crucified unto it, losing all that brightness, beauty and favour, which it made use of to sollicite our minds unto thoughts and desires about it.

Moreover, this frame of spirit alone will keep us on our watch against all those ways and means whereby the vanity of the mind is excited and maintained. Such are the wandring and roving of the outward senses. The senses, especially that of the eye, are ready to become purveyors, to make provisions for the vanity and lusts of the mind. Hence the Psalmist prays, 'Turn away 'mine eyes from beholding vanity.' If the eyes rove after vain objects, the mind will ruminate upon them; and another affirms that he had made a covenant with his eyes, to preserve them from fixing on such objects, as might sollicite lust, or corrupt affections. And it were an useful labour, would this place admit of it, to discover the ready serviceableness of the outward senses and members of the body, unto sin and folly, if not watched against, Rom. vi. 13, 19. Of the same nature is the incessant working of the fancy and imagination, which of itself is evil continually, and all the day long. This is the food of a vain mind, and the vehicle or means of conveyance for all temptations from Satan and the world. Besides, sundry occasions of life and conversation, are usually turned, or abused unto the same end, exciting and exercising of the vanity of the mind.

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Wherever our affections are fixed on spiritual things, our minds will constantly be under a warning or charge to keep diligent watch against all those things, whereby that vanity, which it so abhorreth, which it is so burdened with, is maintained and excited. Nor without this prevalency in the mind, will ever a work of mortification be carried on in the soul, Col. iii. 2, 4, 5.

## CHAP. XXI.

### *How the being Spiritually-minded is Life and Peace.*

Having declared wherein this duty of being spiritually-minded doth consist, that which remains in compliance with the text, from whence the whole is educed, is to manifest how it is life and peace, which is affirmed by the apostle. This shall be done with all brevity, as having passed thro' that which was principally designed.

And two things are we to enquire into.

I. What is meant by life and peace.

II. In what sense to be spiritually-minded, is both of them.

I. That spiritual life whereof we are made partakers in this world, is threefold, or there are three gospel privileges or graces so expressed.

First, There is the life of justification. Therein the just by faith do live; as freed from the condemnatory sentence of the law. So the righteousness of one comes on all that believe unto the

the justification of life, Rom. v. 18. It gives unto believers a right and title to life; for they that 'receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift 'of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Christ 'Jesus, ver. 17. This is not the life here intended, for this life depends solely on the sovereign grace of God, by Jesus Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness unto us, unto pardon, right to life and salvation.

Secondly, There is a life of sanctification. As life in the foregoing sense is opposed unto death spiritual as unto the guilt of it, and the condemnatory sentence of death wherewith it was accompanied; so in this it is opposed unto it, as unto its internal power on, and efficacy in the soul, to keep it under an impotency unto all acts of spiritual life, yea, an enmity against them. This is that life wherewith we are quickned by Christ Jesus, when before we were dead in trespasses and sins, Ephes. ii. 1, 5. Of this life, the apostle treats directly in this place; for having in the first four verses of the chapter declared the life of justification, in the nature and causes of it; in the following, he treats of death spiritual in sin, with the life of sanctification, whereby we are freed from it.

And to be spiritually-minded is this life in a double sense.

(1.) In that it is the principal effect and fruit of that life. The life itself consists in the infusion and communication of a principle of life, that is of faith and obedience, unto all the faculties and powers of our soul, enabling us to live unto God.

God. To be spiritually-minded, which is a grace whereunto many duties do concur, and that not only as to the actings of all grace in them, but as unto the degrees of their exercise, cannot be this life formally. But it is that wherein the power of this principle of life, doth, in the first and chiefest place put forth itself. All actings of grace, all duties of obedience, internal and external, do proceed from this spring and fountain. Nothing of that kind is acceptable unto God, but what is influenced by it, and is an effect of it, but it principally puts forth its virtue and efficacy, in rendring our minds spiritual, which, if it effect not, it works not at all, that is, we are utterly destitute of it. The next and immediate work of the principle of life in our sanctification, is to renew the mind, to make it spiritual; and thereon gradually to carry it on unto that degree which is here called, being spiritually-minded.

(2.) It is the proper adjunct and evidence of it. Would any one know whether he be spiritually alive unto God, with the life of sanctification and holiness? The communication of it unto him, being by an almighty act of creating power, Ephes. ii. 10. It is not easily discernible, so as to help us to make a right judgment of it, from its essence or form. But where things are in themselves indiscernable, we may know them from their proper and inseparable adjuncts, which are therefore called by the names of the essence or the form itself. Such is this being spiritually-minded with respect unto the life of sanctification; it is an inseparable property and adjunct of

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it, whereby it infallibly evidenceth itself unto them in whom it is. In these two respects it is the life of sanctification.

Thirdly, Life is taken for the comforts and refreshments of life; so speaks the apostle, 1 Thes. iii. 8. 'Now we live, if you stand fast in the 'Lord,' now our life will do us good, we have the comforts, the refreshments, and the joys of it. *Non est vivere, Sed valere vita.* The comforts and satisfactions of life, are more life than life itself. It is life, that is, that which makes life to be so, bringing in that satisfaction, those refreshments unto it, which make it pleasant and desirable. And I do suppose this is that which is principally intended in the words of the apostle; it is life, a chearful joyous life, a life worth the living. In explication and confirmation whereof, it is added, that it is peace also.

Peace is twofold, 1st, General and absolute, that is peace with God thro' Jesus Christ, which is celebrated in the scripture, and which is the only original spring and fountain of all consolation unto believers; that which virtually contains in it every thing that is good, useful, or desirable unto them. But it is not here precisely intended. It is not so,

(1.) As to the immediate ground and cause of it, which is our justification, not our sanctification, Rom. v. 1. 'Being justified by faith, we have 'peace with God.' So Christ alone is our peace, as he who made 'peace for us by the blood of 'the cross,' Ephes. ii. 14, 15. Hereof our being spiritually-minded is no way the cause or reason,

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only it is an evidence and pledge of it, as we shall see.

(2.) Not as unto the formal nature of it. Peace with God through the blood of Christ is one thing; and peace in our minds through an holy frame in them, is another. The former is communicated unto us by an immediate act of the holy Spirit dwelling in us, Rom. v. 5. The latter is an effect on our minds begun and gradually carried on, by the duties we have before at large declared. The immediate actings of the holy Spirit, in sealing us, witnessing unto our adoption, and being an earnest of glory, are required unto the former; our own sedulity and diligence in duties, and the exercise of all grace, are required unto the latter.

2dly, Peace is taken for a peculiar fruit of the Spirit, consisting in a gracious quietness and composure of mind, in the midst of difficulties, temptations, troubles, and such other things as are apt to fill us with fears, despondencies, and disquietments. This is that which keeps the soul in its own power, free from transports by fears or passions, on all the abiding grounds of gospel consolation. For altho' this be a peculiar special grace, yet it is that which is influenced and kept alive by the consideration of all the love of God in Christ, and all the fruits of it.

And whereas peace includes in the first notion of it, an inward freedom from oppositions and troubles, which those in whom it is, are outwardly exposed unto, there are two things from which

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we are secured by this peace, which is an effect of being spiritually-minded.

1. The first is offences. There is nothing of whose danger we are more warned in the gospel, than of offences. 'Wo to the world,' saith our Saviour, 'because of offences.' All ages, all times and seasons, are filled with them, and they prove pernicious and destructive to the souls of many. Such are the scandalous divisions that are among Christians; the endless differences of opinions, and diversity of practices in religion and the worship of God; the falls and sins of professors, the fearful ends of some of them; the reproaches that are cast on all that engage into any peculiar way of holiness and strictness of life, with other things of the like nature, whereby the souls of innumerable persons are disquieted, subverted, or infected, are to be reckoned unto this head. Against any hurtful or noxious influence on our minds from these things, against disquietments, dejections of spirit, and disconsolations, are we secured by this peace. So the Psalmist assures us, Psalm cxix. 165. 'Great peace 'have they that love thy law, and nothing shall 'offend them.' The law, or the word of God, is the only way of the revelation of God and his will unto us; and the only outward way and rule of our converse and communication with him. Wherefore, to love the law, is the principal part of our being heavenly-minded, yea, virtually that which comprehends the whole. For such as do so, nothing, none of the things before-mentioned, nor any other of the like nature, shall be an

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offence, a ſtumbling block or cauſe of falling into ſin. And the reaſon is, becauſe they have ſuch an experience in themſelves of the truth, power, efficacy, and holineſs of the goſpel, as that the miſcarriages of men, under a profeſſion of it, ſhall never be unto them an occaſion of falling, or being offended at Chriſt. And I look upon it as a ſign of a very evil frame of heart, when men are concerned in the miſcarriages of ſome that have made profeſſion, whereby they are, it may be, damaged in their outward concerns, ſo that they are ſurprized into reflections on that religion which they profeſs, profeſſing the ſame themſelves.

2. The ſecond is afflictions, perſecutions and ſufferings of all ſorts. It is known by all, (it were well, if it were not ſo well known) what diſquietments, dejections and diſconſolations theſe things are apt to fill the minds of men withal; what fears, troubles, ſorrows, they reflect upon them. Againſt all theſe effects of them, this peace intended, gives us ſecurity. It enables us to preſerve a peaceable, yea, a joyous life in our conflict with them, ſee John xvi. 33.

Both theſe, as here joined together, life and peace, do comprize an holy frame of heart and mind, wherein the ſouls of believers do find reſt, quietneſs, refreſhment and ſatisfaction in God, in the midſt of temptations, afflictions, offences and ſufferings. It is the ſouls compoſure of itſelf in God, in his love in Chriſt Jeſus, ſo as not greatly to be put out of order, to be caſt down with any thing that may befal it, but affords men cheerfulneſs and ſatisfaction in themſelves, tho' they

they walk sometimes in the valley of the shadow of death. Such persons have that in them, abiding with them, as will give them life and peace under all occurrences.

II. Our next inquiry is, how this spiritual mindedness is life and peace, or what it contributes unto them, how it produceth the frame of heart and mind so expressed. And this it doth several ways.

First, It is the only means on our part, of retaining a sense of Divine Love. The love of God in a gracious sense of it, as shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, is the first and only foundation of all durable comforts; such as will support and refresh us under all oppositions and distresses, that is, of life and peace in our souls in any condition. This God communicates by an act of sovereign grace, for the most part without any preparation for it in ourselves. 'He 'creates the fruit of the lips, peace, peace.' But altho' Divine Love be in itself unchangeable, and always the same; yet this sense of it may be lost, as it was in David, when he prayed that 'God 'would restore unto him the joys of his salva-'tion,' Psal. li. 12. And so many others have found it by woful experience. To insist upon all that is required on our parts, that we may retain a gracious refreshing sense of Divine Love, after it is once granted unto us, belongs not unto my present purpose. But this I say, there is not any thing, wherein we are more concerned, for to be careful and diligent in, than as unto what belongs to that end. For men who by a

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meer act of sovereign grace, have tasted herein of the goodness of God, who have had the consolation and joys of it, to be negligent in the keeping and preserving it in their souls, is a provocation that they will at one time or other be sensible of. There is nothing doth more grieve the Holy Spirit, than to have his especial work, whereby he seals us unto the day of redemption, neglected or despised. And it argues a mighty prevalency of some corruption or temptation, that shall cause men willingly, and by their own sloth, to forfeit so inestimable a grace, mercy and privilege. And it is that which there are but few of us, who have not reason to bewail our folly in. Every intimation of divine love, is an inestimable jewel, which, if safely treasured up in our hearts, adds unto our spiritual riches; and being lost, will at one time or another affect us with sorrow.

And I am afraid that many of us are very negligent herein, unto the great prejudice of our souls and spiritual state. Many such intimations are given us by the Holy Ghost thro' the word, which we take little notice of, either we know not the voice of Christ in them, or do not hearken unto him in a due manner, or refuse a compliance with him, when we cannot but know that he speaks unto us, see Cant. v. 2, 3. Or if we receive any impressions of a gracious sense of divine love in them, we quickly lose them, not knowing how much the life of our souls is concerned therein; and what use of them we may have, in our following temptations, trials, and duties.

Now the great means of retaining a sense of

the love of God, which is the only spring of life and peace unto our souls, is this grace and duty of being spiritually-minded. This is evident from the very nature of the duty. For,

(1.) It is the souls preserving of itself in a frame meet to receive and retain this sense of God's love. What other way can there be on our part, but that our minds which are so to receive it and retain it, are spiritual and heavenly, always prepared for that holy converse and communion with himself, which he is pleased to grant us thro' Jesus Christ. And,

(2.) It will fix our thoughts and affections upon the grace and love of God, communicating such an inestimable mercy unto us, as is a sense of his love, which is the only means for the preservation of a relish of it in our hearts. He who is in this frame of mind, will remember, call over, and ruminate upon all such gracious pledges of divine favour; as David is often remembring and calling over what he received in such places, as in the land of the Hermonites, and at the hill of Missar, Psal. xlii. 6. This is the great way whereby this treasure may be preserved.

(3.) A person so minded, and he alone, will have a due valuation of such intimations and pledges of divine love. Those who are full of other things, whose affections cleave unto them, do never esteem heavenly mercies and privileges, as they ought. The 'full soul loatheth the honey-comb.' And God is well pleased, when an high valuation is put upon his kindness; as he is greatly provoked by the contrary frame; which in-

indeed nothing but infinite patience could bear withal. It is an high provocation of God, when men are regardless of, and unthankful for outward temporal mercies; when they receive them, and use them, as if they were their own, that they were Lords of them, at least, that they are due unto them. Much more is he provoked with our regardlesness of the least of those mercies, which are the peculiar purchase of the blood of his Son, and the effects of his eternal love and grace. He alone who is spiritually-minded, valueth, prizeth, and lays up these inestimable jewels in a due manner.

(4.) Such persons only know how to use and improve all communications of a sense of divine love. These things are not granted unto us, to ly by us, without any use of them. They are gracious provisions wherewith we are furnished to enable us unto all other duties, conflicts, and trials. On all occasions are they to be called over for our spiritual relief and encouragement. Hereby are they safely retained. For in the due improvement of them, they grow more bright in our minds every day, and are ready for use, in which posture they are safely preserved. But these things will yet be farther manifest in the instances that ensue.

Secondly, This frame of mind casts out all principles, and causes of trouble and disquietment, which are inconsistent with life and peace. There are in us by nature, principles of contrariety and opposition unto spiritual life and peace, with sundry things, whose abode and prevalency in us, is inconsistent with them. I shall give only one or two instances hereof.

(1.) It will caſt out all filthineſs and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs from our minds. Without this, we can receive no benefit by the means of grace, nor perform any duty in a right manner, Jam. i. 27. This is that which ſtands in direct immediate oppoſition and contrariety unto our being ſpiritually-minded, ſo as they can have no conſiſtency in the ſame perſon. And they expel one another like heat and cold. And where there is this filthineſs and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, there is neither life nor peace. Unclean luſts of the fleſh, or of the ſpirit, working, tumultuating, acting themſelves in the minds of men, will not ſuffer either the life of holineſs to flouriſh in them, or any ſolid peace to abide with them. The ſoul is weakened by them as unto all ſpiritual actings, and made like 'a troubled ſea that cannot reſt, 'whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt.' Where they are abſolutely predominant, there is an hell within, of darkneſs, confuſion and enmity againſt God, preparing men for an hell of puniſhment without, unto eternity. And according as they remain, or have any prevalency in us, ſo are ſpiritual life and peace impaired and obſtructed by them. Now the very nature of this grace and its univerſal exerciſe, is ſuited to the caſting out of all the relicks of this filthineſs and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs. It brings in a principle into the mind directly contrary unto that from whence they do proceed. All the actings of it, which we have deſcribed, ly in direct tendency unto the extirpation of theſe cauſes of filthineſs which ruin life and peace; nor will they by any other way

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be caſt out. If the mind be not ſpiritual, it will be carnal; if it mind not things above, it will fix itſelf inordinately on things below.

(2.) That diſorder which is by nature in the affections and paſſions of the mind, which is directly oppoſite unto ſpiritual life and peace, is caſt out, or cured hereby. It is a bleſſed promiſe of the times of the New Teſtament, of the kingdom and rule of Chriſt, that thro' the efficacy of goſpel grace, 'The lion ſhall ly down with the lamb, 'and the leopard with the kid,' Iſa. xi. 6. Perſons of the moſt intemperate and outragious paſſions, ſhall be made meek and lovely. Where this is not in ſome meaſure effected, according unto the degrees of the prevalency of ſuch paſſions in us, we have not been made partakers of evangelical grace. It were an eaſy taſk to demonſtrate how the diſorder of our affections and paſſions is deſtructive of ſpiritual life and peace. The contrariety that is in them, and contradiction unto one another, their violence, impetuouſneſs, and reſtleſneſs, their readineſs to receive and take in provocations on all occaſions, and frequently on none at all, but what imagination preſents unto them, are ſufficient evidences hereof. Can we think that life and peace do inhabit that ſoul, wherein anger, wrath, envy, exceſs in love unto earthly things, do dwell? and on all occaſions exert themſelves; there, where there is a continual tumult, fighting and rebellion, as there is, where the paſſions of the mind are not under the conduct of reaſon, nor of grace?

The nature and principal effect of this ſpiritu-

al-mindedness, is to bring all the affections and passions of our minds into that holy order, wherein they were created. This was that uprightness wherein God made us; namely, The whole blessed order of all the powers, faculties, and affections of our souls, in all their operations, in order unto our living unto God. And this is restored unto us by this grace, this duty of being spiritually-minded. And wherein it falls short of that perfection which we had originally; (for the remainders of that disorder which befel us by sin, will still in part continue) it is recompensed by the actings of that new principle of gospel grace which is exercised in it. For every act of our affections towards God, in the power of grace, exceeds, and is of another nature, above that we could do, or attain unto, in the state of nature uncorrupted. Hereby are life and peace brought into our souls, and preserved in them.

(3.) It is that whereby our hearts and minds are taken off from the world, and all inordinate love thereunto. Where this is in a prevalent degree, there is neither life nor peace. And every excess in it, both weakens spiritual life, and disturbs, yea, destroys all solid spiritual peace. I have occasionally spoken unto it before, as also the way whereby our minding of the things that are above in a due manner, doth deliver and preserve our souls from the snares of it. And if we diligently examine ourselves, we shall find, that in our inordinate affections, and cleaving unto these things, the principal causes why we thrive no more in the power of spiritual life, and whence we

we meet with so many disquietments and dejections of spirit, unto the disturbance of our peace and rest in God, is from hence. For there is no grace which is not impaired by it in its nature, or not obstructed by it in its exercise. Wherefore, to be spiritually-minded is life and peace, because it subdues and expels that inordinate love unto present things, which is destructive of them both, and inconsistent with them.

(4.) It preserves the mind in a due and holy frame in the performance of all other duties. This also is indispensibly required, unto the preservation of life and peace, especially unto the improvement of them. They will not abide, much less thrive and flourish in any persons who are negligent in holy duties, or do not perform them in a due manner. And there are four things which impede or hinder us from such an attendance unto holy duties, as may be advantagious unto our souls; against all which we have relief by being spiritually-minded.

1. Distractions. 2. Despondencies. 3. Weariness. 4. Unreadiness of grace for exercise.

1. Distraction of mind and thoughts, hath this evil effect, which many complain of, few take the right way of deliverance from. For this evil will not be cured by attendance unto any particular directions, without a change of the whole frame of our minds. Nothing can give us relief herein, but a prevalent delight in being exercised about things spiritual and heavenly. For hence arise all our distractions; the want of fixing our minds on spiritual things with delight, makes them

obnoxious to be diverted from them on all occasions, yea, to seek occasions for such diversions. It is this frame alone, namely, Of spiritual mindedness, that will give us this delight. For thereby the soul is transformed into the likness of spiritual things; so as that they are suited unto it, and pleasant unto our affections. The mind, and the things themselves are thereby so fitted unto each other, that on every occasion they are ready for mutual embraces, and not easily drawn off by any cause or means of the distractions so complained of, yea, they will all be prevented hereby.

2. Despondencies in duties arise from the frequent incursions of the guilt of sin. The remembrance hereof, frequently sollicites the minds of persons in their first entrances into duty, unless they are under especial actings of grace, stirring them up unto earnestness and fervency in what they undertake. At other seasons it renders men lifeless and heartless, so as that they know not whether they had best pray or no, when duty and opportunity call them thereunto. To be spiritually-minded, we have manifested in many instances, is the great preservative against these disheartening incursions of sin. It is the souls watch and guard against them, whence ever they arise or proceed. No lust or corruption can be prevalent in a spiritual mind. And this is the principal cause of such incursions of sin, as affect the soul with a disheartening sense of guilt. No affections can abide in any sinful disorder, where the mind is so affected. This also gives sin an entrance unto a distracting sense of guilt. But the sole cure hereof lies in this grace and duty. The

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like may be said of all other ways, means, and occasions of such incursions of sin.

3. Weariness in, and of spiritual duties, abate their tendency unto the improvement of life and peace in us. This evil ariseth from the same cause with that of distraction before-mentioned. And it is oft-times encreased by the weakness and indispositions of the flesh, or of the outward man. Sometimes the spirit is willing but thro' the weakness of the flesh it is disappointed. The principal cure hereof lies in that delight which spiritual-mindedness gives unto the soul in spiritual things. For where there is a constant delight in any thing, there will be no weariness, at least, not such as shall hinder any from cleaving firmly unto the things wherein he doth delight. Whilst therefore we are exercised in a delight in spiritual things, weariness cannot prevalently assault the mind. And it is the only relief against that weariness which proceeds from the indispositions of the outward man. For as it will preserve the mind from attending too much unto their sollicitations, crying, Spare thyself, by filling and possessing the thoughts with other things; so it will offer an holy violence unto the complaints of the flesh, silencing them with a sense of, and delight in holy duties.

4. The unreadiness of grace for its due and proper exercise, is another thing which defeats us of the benefit of holy duties. The seasons of them are come, sense of duties carries men unto an attendance unto them, and the performance of them. But when they should enter upon them, those graces of faith, love, fear, and delight, where-

wherein the soul and being of them do consist, are out of the way, unready for a due exercise; so as that men take up and satisfy themselves with the meer outward performance of them. The heart and mind have been taken up with other things, due preparation have been wanting; men come unto them with reeking thoughts of earthly occasions; and it is no easy matter in, or immediately out of, such a frame, to stir up grace unto a due exercise. But herein lieth the very life of being spiritually-minded. The nature of it consists in the keeping and preserving all grace in a readiness for its exercise as our occasions require.

And this is an effectual way whereby this grace comes to be life and peace. For they cannot be attained, they cannot be preserved, without such a constancy and spirituality in all holy duties, as we shall never arrive at, unless we are spiritually-minded.

Lastly, This frame of mind brings the soul unto, and keeps it at its nearest approaches, unto heaven and blessedness, wherein ly the eternal springs of life and peace. According unto the degrees of this grace in us, such are those of our approaches unto God. Nearness unto him, gives us our initial conformity unto him, by the renovation of his image in us, as our presence with him will give us perfection therein; for when we see him, we shall be like unto him. He therefore alone, as he is in Christ, being the fountain of life and peace, by our drawing nigh unto him, and by our likeness of him, will they thrive and flourish in our souls.

*FINIS.*

# An ABSTRACT OF THE LIFE

## Of the late Reverend and Learned *JOHN OWEN*, D.D.

## Sometime Vice-Chancellor of the UNIVERSITY of *OXFORD*.

MR. JOHN OWEN deſcended from an ancient and honourable family in Wales, his Great-Great-Grandfather being Lewis Owen of Dolgelly, Eſq; Vice-chamberlain and baron of the exchequer in North-Wales. This gentleman had ſeveral ſons, and the fifth of them named Griffith, had a daughter called Suſan, married to Humphrey Owen a branch of the ſame family. By this marriage Humphry had fifteen ſons, and Henry the youngeſt was Father to John we now treat of. Henry was bred a ſcholar, ſtudied philoſophy and divinity at Oxford, was afterwards Vicar of Stadham in that county, and becauſe of his ſtrict piety and zeal for a reformation of corruptions in the church, was branded with the name of a Puritan. He married —— ———— by whom he had many children, and lived in great reputation for piety and uſefulneſs in the miniſtry to a good old age.

John his ſecond ſon, whoſe life we now write, was born at Stadham, in 1617, and bred in grammar learning under Edward Sylveſter, who taught ſchool many years in All Saints pariſh in Oxon. John had ſuch pregnant parts, and was ſo diligent in his ſtudies, that he ſoon became fit for the univerſity, and entered a ſtudent in Queen's College, Anno 1628. He was inſtructed in philoſophy by Mr. Tho.

Barlow

Barlow a fellow of that college, and commenced Master of Arts in 1637, when he was but nineteen years of age. He studied hard, and for several years did not allow himself above four hours sleep in a night; so that he made a great progress in learning, and being a strong well-made young man, he sometimes diverted himself, for his health, by leaping, throwing the bar, ringing of bells, and other robust exercises.

He lived in the college till he was 21 years of age, after which he laboured under very remarkable vicissitudes for a considerable time. Dr. Laud then archbishop of Canterbury, and chancellor of Oxford, imposed several of his superstitious rites upon the university, and commanded them to be observed on pain of expulsion. Mr. Owen tho' hitherto bred according to the church of England, was not able to digest those impositions, which reduced him to very great straits: It was his worldly interest to comply, but he could not in conscience do it. The doctor has writ many pieces in defence of his nonconformity, but those who desire to see the hinge of the controversy in a few words, may find it in his book of Communion with God, as follows.

'They (*i. e.* believers) will receive nothing, practise nothing, own nothing in his worship but what is of his own 'appointment: They know that from the foundation of 'the world he never did allow, nor ever will, that in any 'thing the will of the creatures should be the measure of 'his honour, or the principle of his worship, either as to 'matter or manner. It was a witty and true sense that one 'gave of the second commandment, *Non imago non simulacrum prohibetur; sed, non facies tibi*; it is a making 'to ourselves, an inventing, a finding out ways of worship, 'or means of honouring God, not by him appointed, that 'is so severely forbidden. Believers know what entertainment all will-worship finds with God; *Who hath required 'these things at your hands? And in vain do ye worship me, 'teaching for doctrines the traditions of men*, is the best it 'meets with. I shall take leave to say what is upon my 'heart, and what (the Lord assisting) I shall willingly endeavour to make good against all the world, namely, '** That that principle, *That the church hath power to*

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'*institute and appoint any thing or ceremony belonging to* '*the worship of God, either as to matter or manner, beyond* '*the ordinary observance of such circumstances as necessarily* '*attend such ordinances as Christ himself hath instituted,* 'lies at the bottom of all the horrible superstition and ido-'latry, of all the confusion, blood, persecution, and wars, 'that have for so long a season spread themselves over the 'face of the Christian world; and that it is the design of 'a great part of the book of the *Revelations* to make a dis-'covery of this truth.

'And I doubt not but that the great controversy which 'God hath had with this nation for so many years, and 'which he hath pursued with so much anger and indigna-'tion, was upon this account; *That, contrary to the glo-*'*rious light of the gospel which shone among us, the wills* '*and fancies of men, under the name of order, decency, and* '*authority of the church,* (a chimera that none knew what 'it was, nor wherein the power did consist, nor in whom 'reside) *were imposed on men, in the ways and worship of* '*God.* Neither was all that pretence of glory, beauty, 'comeliness, and conformity that then was pleaded, any 'thing more or less than what God doth so describe in the 'church of Israel, Ezek. xvi. 25, &c. Hence was the Spi-'rit of God in prayer derided; hence was the powerful 'preaching of the gospel despised; hence was the sabbath-'day decryed; hence was holiness stigmatized and perse-'cuted: To what end? That Jesus Christ might be de-'posed from the sole privilege and power of law-making 'in his church; that the true husband might be thrust a-'side, and adulterers of his spouse embraced; that task-'masters might be appointed in and over his house, which 'he never gave to his church, Eph. iv. 12. that a ceremo-'nious, pompous, outward shew-worship, drawn from Pa-'gan, Judaical, and Antichristian observations, might be 'introduced; of all which there is not one word, tittle, 'or iota in the whole book of God.'

There is a great deal more on the same subject, for which I refer to the book itself.

These being Mr. Owen's principles, we are not to wonder at his Nonconformity, and that in those days he was expelled the university. Upon this occasion he has several

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times owned with great sorrow, that before this time, his ambition to make himself considerable either in church or state, was the chief motive of his studying so hard; and that the honouring of God, or serving of his country, otherwise than to make him capable of serving himself, had little room in his thoughts: But it pleased God, about this time to form impressions of his grace and Spirit upon his mind, which made him zealous for the purity of worship, and reforming the corruptions of the church.

This change of judgment was soon observed by his relations, who thereupon abandoned him as a Puritan; and the Laudean party was so exasperated against him, that he was forced to leave the university.

This, with a deep sense of his sinful state by nature, threw him into a vein of melancholy. He had many troubles of mind with relation to his spiritual state, and continued under them near five years, when it pleased God, as he many times owned, with great humility and thankfulness, to perfect his conversion, and bring forth judgment to victory. He was not altogether cured of his melancholy when the troubles in Scotland, and the civil wars in England, occasioned by the impositions in church and state, broke out; and he owning the parliament's cause, his uncle by the father's side, who maintained him at the university, being a zealous royalist, was so angry with him, that tho' he designed to have made him his heir, because he had no children of his own, he abandoned him, settled his estate upon another, and died without leaving him any thing.

This was a great mortification to Mr. Owen, for his father had so many other children that he was able to do little for him. Thus all his aspiring thoughts to be considerable in church or state, as they then stood, were dashed at once: But he has often owned, to the glory of infinite wisdom and goodness, that he saw God had made use of his ambition to qualify him for future service in another manner than what his own natural inclinations had proposed.

In the mean time providence did not forsake him; Sir Robert Dormer of Ashcot in the parish of Great Milton, near the place where Mr. Owen was born, took him for his chaplain, and tutor to his eldest son; in both which respects he acquitted himself to the great satisfaction of Sir Robert and his family.

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He was afterwards chaplain to John Lord Lovelace at Hurley in Berkshire, where he continued some time: And tho' that Lord was a great Royalist, he treated him with much civility; but his lordship going at last to the King's army, Mr. Owen took leave of the family, and came to London, where he was an utter stranger. He took lodgings in Charterhouse-yard, where he wrote his *Display of Arminianism*, which was ordered to be printed by the Committee of the house of Commons, and afterwards occasioned his advancement.

He was not yet quite cured of his melancholy, nor fully eased from troubles of mind about his spiritual state; but it pleased God to deliver him from them in the following manner, as he frequently owned it himself, to the glory of free grace.

He went one Lord's day with a friend, thinking to hear that eminent divine Mr. Calamy, but by some extraordinary occasion that worthy person was hindred from preaching, upon which many went out of the church. This disappointment added much to Mr. Owen's trouble, and his friend endeavoured to carry him elsewhere to hear another person of eminence; and so much the rather, that it was not certain whether there would be any body at that time to supply Mr. Calamy's place; but Mr. Owen being conveniently seated, and too much indisposed to walk any further, he resolved to stay a while longer, and if no preacher came, to return to his lodgings.

At last a country minister altogether unknown to Mr. Owen, as it seems he was to the parish, came up to the pulpit, and after a very serious and fervent prayer, took for his text these words, Mat. viii. 26. *Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?* The very reading of these words surprized Mr. Owen, who immediately put up a short ejaculation, that God would be pleased by that minister, to speak to his condition. His prayer was graciously heard; for providence so ordered it that the minister raised and answered those very objections which Mr. Owen had commonly formed against himself; and what was remarkable, he managed them in the same method which Mr. Owen had frequently done in his own mind, tho' without effect: But it pleased the gracious God so to bless this sermon to him,

tho' otherwise a plain, ordinary, familiar discourse, that it resolved his doubts, quieted his conscience, and laid the foundation of that spiritual peace and comfort which he afterwards enjoyed during the course of his life.

This appeared to have been by the immediate direction of heaven; for Mr. Owen could never hear of the minister's name, nor where he lived, tho' he made the most diligent enquiry.

Thus the great master of assemblies thought fit to prepare this eminent person for his future work in the ministry. He pulled down his natural ambition, humbled him under his own mighty hand, and laid the foundation deep, answerable to that high superstructure of grace which he afterwards raised upon it. He thoroughly convinced him, that the highest degree of human learning and oratory, signified little towards building up the saints in their most holy faith, without the concurring influences of the holy Spirit; and that however skilful the planter and waterer may be, the increase must come from God alone, who ministers seed to the sower, and gives a blessing with it.

This was a very convincing and seasonable caution for such a one as Mr. Owen, who had so large a measure of natural and acquired abilities, not to value himself upon them, but to let him see the vanity of his ambition to make himself considerable in the church by his indefatigable study; for he was hereby taught, that it was not *the enticing words of man's wisdom, but the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that could make a successful preacher*, 2 Cor. ii. 4.

Of this Mr. Owen was so fully sensible, that tho' he was one of the most learned men of the age, he always studied plainness in his sermons, contented himself with his natural masculine stile, and neither affected pompous oratory, nor to embellish his discourses with human reason, of which he was so great a master, but considered that it was his duty to deliver the mind of God to his hearers, and therefore founded his sermons upon the divine oracles, which made him an awful, serious, spiritual and successful minister.

But not to anticipate his character, I pursue his history. We find that in 1644, he published a book in Quarto, called

led *The Duty of Pastors and People distinguished.* This was approved by the Rev. Mr. Joseph Caryl. The design of this book was, That the sacred calling of the ministry might retain its ancient dignity, and the people of God not be deprived of their Christian liberty. Here he wrote against mens taking upon them solemnly to preach the word, or undertaking any formal act properly belonging to the ministry, without authority from the church. On the other hand, he declared himself against abridging people of the liberty of private conference and prayer, provided they did not separate from the true publick worship, and despise their brethren and ministers. At the conclusion of this piece, he takes notice, that he had the judgment and practice of the whole church of Scotland on his side, who, by an act of their assembly in 1641, commanded godly conference at all occasional meetings, as the word of God had commanded it, provided none invade the pastor's office to preach the word, who are not thereunto called by God and his church.

This is proof sufficient that Mr. Owen was none of those Sectarians who were for destroying the order of the ministry, and allowing any one that pleased to invade the pulpit under the notion of gifted-brethren.

Mr. Owen's reputation encreased daily, so that the next account we have of him, is, that in April 1646 he was employed to preach a fast-sermon before the house of Commons, which he did from Acts xvi. 11.

He was settled minister at Coggeshall in Essex in 1647, where he published his book intitled *Salus Electorum Sanguis Jesu,* which was printed in 1648. To this treatise are prefixed two attestations by two reverend ministers; the one is by Mr. Stanley Gower, who says, 'The reverend 'and learned author had received strength from God like 'another Sampson to pull down the rotten house of Arminianism upon the heads of those Philistines who would 'uphold it. The other is by Mr. Richard Byfield, who declares 'That he knew not the author either by name or 'face, but the book being delivered to him for perusal, he 'read it with delight and profit; with delight in the clearness and fulness of the arguments, and the candour of 'the language; with profit in the vindication of abused

'scriptures, the opening of obscure places, and chiefly in 'disclosing the hidden mystery of God the Father and of 'Christ, in the glorious and gracious work of redemption;' adding, 'That the glory of each person in the unity of the 'Godhead, about that work, was distinctly held forth in 'the book with shining splendour, the error of the Arminians smitten in the jaw-bone, and the broachers of it 'bridled with bit and curb.'

We have no further account of Mr. Owen's publick appearances, except his sermons before the parliament, and other treatises mentioned in the catalogue subjoined to this Book, till September 1650, when the then government thought fit to send him with their army to Scotland. In this journey he preached a sermon at Berwick, and another at Edinburgh, which were both printed.

His behaviour there was so acceptable to those in power, that in March following he was made Dean of Christ-church in Oxford. And it appears that Mr. Owen was soon after made Vice-chancellor of the University; for it is recorded there, That on Dec. 23. 1653, John Owen Dean of Christ-church and Vice-chancellor of the University, was diplomated D. D. That his diploma was dated the 22d, and read and sealed in convocation the day after.

About this time Dr. Owen, as we must henceforth call him, published his book, intituled, *The Doctrine of the Saints Perseverance*, in answer to Mr. John Goodwin's discourse, intituled, *Redemption Redeem'd*.

He published a Book upon Schism in 1657, wherein he discovers and considers the true nature of it, with reference to the then differences of religion. It is a very learned and solid piece, and well worth the reader's perusal, considering what a noise we have had of late years about schism.

In 1659 he published a book at Oxford, of the Divine original Authority, self-evidencing light and power of the Scriptures: Also a vindication of the purity and integrity of the Hebrew and Greek texts, in some considerations on the Prolegomena and appendix to the late Biblia Polyglotta, and some Exercitations about the nature and perfection of the Scriptures, the right of interpretation, and internal light of Revelation.

We have seen the Doctor for a considerable time in great emi-

eminency and reputation, and must now come to another scene of his life, which made him much less in the eye of the world, tho' his character still grew brighter with good men: The notes I have concerning him, say, that he was removed from being Vice-chancellor of the University in 1657. which I take to be a proof that he did not throughly approve of Oliver's measures. And in 1659 he was removed from being Dean of Christ-church. The authors who mention these things tell us nothing of the reasons, but there is ground to believe that both proceeded from some change in the times; for we are told he was removed from the Deanry soon after Richard Cromwell was made Protector, when things were hastning to a crisis; which proved very calamitous to such as the Doctor, who could not comply with that conformity to the church of England which was afterwards required.

The next account we have of him, is from Dr. Calamy's 2d vol. of the ejected ministers, page 54. where he says, 'That when Dr. Owen was laid aside here, he had some 'thoughts of going to New England, where he was invited 'to the government of their University; but was stopped 'by particular orders from K. Charles II.' He has no account of the reasons; but it is probable that it proceeded from some pretence of respect; for Mr. Humphreys, in his character of the Doctor, says, 'He was sometimes favoured 'with that Prince's conversation;' and I am informed by one of the Doctor's relations, that King Charles II. offered him a Bishoprick: But no worldly honour or advantage could prevail on the Doctor to change his principles.

Dr. Calamy says further, 'That Dr. Owen was invited 'to be a Professor of Divinity in the United Provinces, but 'refused it.'

These instances are enough to shew the general esteem which the Doctor had deservedly acquired at home and abroad for his piety and learning.

After the Nonconformist ministers were ejected, the Doctor retired to his own house at Stadham, where he sometimes preached; and he came afterwards to London, where he had a very numerous congregation in Leadenhall-street, of which several persons of quality were stated members.

Here he succeeded the learned and reverend Mr. Joseph

Caryl; and afterwards publiſhed an epiſtle to ſome of the laſt ſermons of that worthy perſon, intitled, *The Nature and Principles of Love*.

Tho' the Doctor was laid aſide from preaching publickly, by the civil authority, he did not ceaſe to improve his talent in defence of his principles, and the fundamental doctrines of the goſpel, that were afterwards controverted; for we find that ſoon after, *viz.* in 1662, he publiſhed a diſcourſe concerning *Liturgies*, and their impoſitions; but not having the book, I can ſay no more of it.

The ſame year he publiſhed animadverſions on a book caled *Fiat Lux*, or *A Guide in Differences of Religion betwixt Papiſt and Proteſtant, Presbyterian and Independant*.

The ſcene being thus changed, Dr. *Owen*, inſtead of being countenanced by authority, is obliged now to become an humble petitioner for liberty of conſcience to himſelf and his brethren.

In the mean time he was ſo far from being wholly taken up in controverſies, that he ſtill kept in view the principal end of his calling, which was the advancement of piety in the world, without reſpect of perſons or parties. And next year he publiſhed an excellent practical peace, intitled, *The Nature, Power, Deceit, and Prevalency of the Remainders of Indwelling Sin in Believers*.

As a full proof of his concern for the Chriſtian religion in general, in oppoſition to its enemies of every ſort, he publiſhed that ſame year his *Exercitations* on the epiſtle to the *Hebrews;* with an *Expoſition* on the two firſt chapters of that epiſtle. The value of that work, and of the ſucceeding parts, are ſo well known in the church of God, that we need ſay little of them; for they are admired by all men of learning, but eſpecially by ſuch as have their ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern betwixt good and evil. Theſe learned *Exercitations* met with a general acceptance; nor indeed could they fail of it by any who had the intereſt of the Chriſtian religion at heart; for here the Doctor vindicates the canonical authority of that epiſtle againſt the *Jews*, and other enemies of Chriſtianity, with ſo much ſtrength from Scripture, the authority of the ancients, and reaſon, as thoſe who are enemies to the deity of the Son of God, never have been, nor ever will be able to anſwer.

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The Doctor going on from strength to strength, did, in 1669, publish a Practical Exposition on the 130th *Psalm*; wherein the nature of the forgiveness of sin is declared, the truth and reality of it asserted, and the case of a soul distressed with the guilt of sin, and relieved by a discovery of forgiveness with God, is at large discoursed. This piece is so spiritual, and relates so much to the experimental part of Christianity, that it shews the Doctor to have been a great Christian as well as a divine, and has accordingly obtained a due esteem among all those who are Christians in earnest.

Such was the unhappiness of the times, that the Doctor was soon diverted from these serious studies by the Ecclesiastical Polity writ by Parker, afterwards bishop of Oxford, who, every one that has read his writings, must own, had a great deal more of wit and learning than religion, to which he was an absolute stranger: But the Doctor did handsomely expose him, by an answer, called Truth and Innocency vindicated; to which he was never able to make any satisfactory reply.

The Doctor shortly after he published his *Brief Declaration and Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity, and the Person and Satisfaction of Christ*, which were then violently opposed by the licentious writers of those times. This small piece has met with such an universal acceptance by true Christians of all denominations, that the *Seventh Edition* of it was lately published; so that we need say no more of it.

How the Doctor spent his succeeding years, and what his endeavours were for promoting peace among Protestants of all denominations, and serious practical religion, appears by his book intituled, *An Inquiry into the Original, Nature, Power, Order, and Communion of Evangelical Churches; With the true Nature of a Gospel-church and its Government;* printed after his death, in 1689; Wherein he says, 'That the union of churches consists in their relation 'unto God, as their Father and unto Christ as their only 'immediate head of influence and rule, with a participation 'of the same Spirit in the same faith and doctrine of truth, 'the same kind of holiness, the same duties of divine worship; especially the same mysteries of baptism and the supper; the observance of the same rules or commands of 'Christ

'Christ in all church order, with mutual love, effectual, to 'all the ends of their being and constitution, or the edification of the church Catholick.

'The primitive church, says he, provided for communion in faith, by creeds and symbols, or confessions of faith, 'as is very well known; but these things coming to be abused, there is nothing required unto the communion of 'all particular churches in the world, but a belief of the 'scriptures to be the word of God, with a professed assent 'to all the divine revelations therein contained, provided 'that no error be received that is contrary to the principal 'or fundamental doctrines of it; for tho' any society of 'men should profess the Scripture to be the word of God, 'and avow and consent unto the revelations therein made, 'yet by the conceptions of their minds and misunderstanding of the sense of the Holy Spirit therein, they may embrace and adhere unto such errors as may cut them off 'from all communion with the Catholick church in faith, 'such as the denial of the Trinity, the incarnation of Christ, 'and his Divine person, or offices, the redemption of the 'church by his blood, and the necessity of regeneration by 'his Spirit. He says further, That people may cut themselves off from the communion of the Catholick church, 'by making traditions equal to the written word; by giving another head to the church; by adding another sacrifice than what he hath offered; or by confining the church 'to a party.'

This treatise deserves the serious perusal of the professors of Christianity in the present age. The Doctor adds, 'That particular churches have a communion unto their 'mutual edification, by advice in synods or councils, which 'are the meetings of divers churches by their messengers 'or delegates, to consult and determine such things as are 'of common concernment by virtue of this communion. 'The necessity of this, says he, is evident from the light 'of nature. Churches have all one and the same authority 'of institution, and the same rule and order of worship: '*No church is so independent, that it can always and in all 'cases observe the duties it owes to the Lord Christ and the 'church Catholick by all those powers which it is able to act 'in itself distinctly, without conjunction of others; and the 'church that confines its duty to the acts of its own assem-*

'*blies*

'*blies, cuts itself off from the external communion of the* '*church Catholick.*

'This acting in synods, says he, is an institution of 'Christ, not in express command, but in the nature of the 'thing itself, fortified with apostolical examples. The end 'of all particular churches is the edification of the church 'Catholick unto the glory of God in Christ; and it is evi- 'dent that in many instances this cannot be attained, but 'must be sinfully neglected, unless this way be attained un- 'to. He allows appeals from particular churches, and says, 'That particular church which extends not its duty beyond 'its own assemblies and members, is fallen off from its prin- 'cipal end and institution; and every principle that inclines 'any church to confine its care and duty to its own edifi- 'cation only, yea, or to those only which agree with it in 'some particular practice, make it neglective of all due 'means of the edification of the Catholick church, and 'schismatical.

He adds, 'That synods are consecrated to the use of the 'church in all ages, by the example of the apostles in their 'guidance of the first churches of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, which 'has the force of a divine institution, as being given them 'under the infallible conduct of the Holy Ghost, *Acts* xv. 'If it be reported or known by credible testimony, that 'any church has admitted superstition or vanity in worship, 'or that its members walk like those, *Phil.* iii. 18, 19. and 'does not endeavour its own reformation, other churches 'in communion with her, after more private ways for its 'reduction, ought to assemble in a synod for advice, either 'for recovery; or, in case of obstinacy to with-hold com- 'munion.

'Churches planted within such a circumference as gives 'facility or convenience for such conventions, should by 'virtue of their mutual communion, be in express readiness 'to conveen on all occasions of common concern.

'Whereas it is evidently useful unto the edification of the 'church Catholick, that all the churches professing the same 'doctrine of faith within the limits of the same civil govern- 'ment, should hold constant actual communion among 'themselves unto the ends before mentioned: I see not 'how it can be any abridgement of the liberty of particu- 'lar churches, or interfere with any of their rights which

 'they

'they hold by divine institution, if through more constant 'lesser synods for advice, there be a communication of 'their mutual concerns unto those that are greater, until, 'if occasion require, and it be expedient, there be a gene-'ral assembly of them all to advise about any thing wherein 'they are all concerned.

'Classes or conventions of the elders or officers of sun-'dry parochial churches, may be held sometimes, and in 'some places, unto edification, for presential communion.

'Synods are to consist of those chosen by their churches, 'and the elders or officers ought to be the principal, other-'ways confusion would quickly follow, but they may have 'others joined with them.

'The synod, *Act* xv. declared their decrees to be from 'the Holy Ghost, because it was according to Scripture.

'Hence it follows; that a synod conveened in the name 'Christ, by the voluntary consent of several churches con-'cerned in mutual communion, may declare and determine 'of the mind of the Holy Ghost in Scripture, and decree 'the observation of things true and necessary, because 'revealed and appointed in the Scripture, which are to be 'received, owned, and observed on the evidence of the 'mind of the Holy Ghost in them, and the ministerial au-'thority of the synod itself.

I have been the larger in this extract of the Doctor's o-pinion about church-government, because it shews (what-ever might have been his sentiments when younger) how much he agreed with all Protestant churches, that of Eng-land excepted, in this point, in the latter part of his days; and that had others been of his mind, the difference be-twixt those called Presbyterians and Independents might have easily been reconciled. He was of so healing a tem-per in this matter, that I heard him say, before a person of quality, and others, 'He could readily join with Pres-'bytery as it was exercised in Scotland.

His hard studies and indefatigable labour in preaching and writing, brought the stone upon him, a distemper very common to those of a studious life; this, with an Asthma, very much broke his constitution for several years before his death. He was so universally beloved, that persons of quality used to invite him to their country-houses in sum-mer, and those invitations were so frequent, as sometimes

gave

gave him difficulty enough how to avoid difobliging one or other by not accepting them.

As the Doctor was of a chearful temper during his health, he bore the racking pains which ufually attend the ftone, with that patience and refignation as became fo great a man, and fo excellent a Chriftian. He lay fick above a month, and fuffered much by violent pains in his head. His converfation during that time, was, according to the main courfe of his life, very heavenly and fpiritual; and he was much affected with the calamitous times which then afflicted the Nonconformifts, and threatened the Proteftant churches all over Europe. He was fpeechlefs for fome hours before his death, but very fenfible, and frequently lifted up his eyes and hands with great devotion. Dr. Cox and Dr. King (afterwards Sir Edmond King) were his phyficians, and afcribed his dying hard, to the ftrength of his brain.

It was evident to thofe who were about him, that he entertained death not as a king of terrors; for he had been long expecting and preparing for it, as appears, among other things, by the preface to his book intituled, ΣΥΝΕΣΙΣ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΗ, or *The Caufes, Ways, and Means of Underftanding the Mind of God, as revealed in his Word*, &c. where he expreffes himfelf thus; ‘ I have yet propofed a ‘ farther enquiry, namely, *What conduct in thefe times of* ‘ *great contefts about the affurance of faith, and the caufes* ‘ *of it, every one that takes care of his own falvation ought* ‘ *to betake himfelf unto, that he may not be deceived or mif-* ‘ *carry in the end;* and this is defigned with efpecial re- ‘ fpect unto the church of Rome, which vehemently pre- ‘ tends unto the fole infallible conduct in thefe things. *But,* ‘ *probably, the near approach of the daily expected and ear-* ‘ *neftly defired hour of my difcharge from all further fervice* ‘ *in this world, will prevent the accomplifhment of that in-* ‘ *tention. In the continual profpect hereof do I yet live and* ‘ *rejoice, which among other advantages unfpeakable, hath* ‘ *already given me an inconcernment in thofe oppofitions,* ‘ *which the paffions or interefts of men engage them in, of a* ‘ *very near alliance unto, and fcarce diftinguifhable from* ‘ *that which the grave will afford.*

This great man died, with a full affurance of a better life, on Bartholomew-day, Aug. 24th, 1683. in the 67th year of

of his age. He had a brother colonel Henry Owen, to whose son he had left his estate at Stadham, the colonel himself having an estate in Ireland. And as the Doctor's lady always behaved to him with the tenderest affection, he left her 3000 *l.* besides 60 *l.* *per annum*, and his house at Ealing; and gave 30 *l.* a piece to two of his servants that attended him in his illness.

As the Doctor was universally esteemed during his life, his corpse was attended from Ealing, where he died, to the Dissenters burying-place in Bunhil-fields, by near a hundred noblemens, gentlemens, and citizens coaches, with six horses each, and a great number of gentlemen in mourning on horseback. He was interred in a new vault erected on purpose by his worthy relict, who out-lived him about twenty years, and was interred by him.

We shall conclude with the Doctor's own words, as follow. 'My principal work having been now for a long 'season to die daily, as living in a continual expectation 'of my dissolution, I shall acquaint the reader with some 'few of my thoughts and reliefs, with reference unto death 'itself.

'There are sundry things required of us, that we may 'be able to encounter death chearfully, constantly, and vic-'toriously. For want of these, or some of them, I have 'known gracious souls who have lived in a kind of bondage 'for fear of death, all their days. We know not how God 'will manage any of our minds and souls in that season, in 'that trial; for he acts towards us in all such things in a 'way of sovereignty. But these are the things which he 'requireth of us in a way of duty.

'1*st*, Peculiar actings of faith, to resign and commit our 'departing souls into the hand of him, who is able to re-'ceive them, to keep and preserve them, as also to dispose 'of them into a state of rest and blessedness, are required 'of us.

'The soul is now parting with all things here below, and 'and that for ever. None of all the things which it hath 'seen, heard, or enjoyed by its outward senses, can be 'prevailed with to stay with it one hour, or to take one 'step with it in the voyage wherein it is engaged: It must 'alone by itself launch into eternity. It is entering into an

invisible

'invisible world, which it knows no more of than it hath 'received by faith. None hath come from the dead to inform us of the state of the other world. Yea, God seems 'on purpose so to conceal it from us, that we should have 'no evidence of it, at least as unto the manner of things in 'it but what is given unto faith by divine revelation. Hence 'those who died and were raised again from the dead unto 'any continuance among men, as Lazarus, probably knew 'nothing of the invisible state. Their souls were preserv-'ed by the power of God in their being, but bound up as 'unto present operations. This made a great emperor cry 'out on the approach of death, *O animula, tremula, vagula, blandula; quae nunc abibis in loca horrida, squalida,* '&c. O poor trembling wandering soul, into what places 'of darkness and defilement art thou going!

'How is it like to be after the few moments, which under the pangs of death we have to continue in this world? 'Is it an annihilation that lies at the door? Is death the de-'struction of our whole being, so as that after it we shall 'be no more? So some would have the state of things to 'be. Is it a state of subsistence in a wandering condition 'up and down the world, under the influence of other 'more powerful spirits that rule in the air, visiting tombs 'and solitary places, and sometimes making appearances of 'themselves, by the impressions of those more powerful spi-'rits, as some imagine from the story concerning Samuel 'and the witch of Endor, and as it is commonly received 'in the Papacy, out of a compliance with their imaginati-'on of purgatory? Or is it a state of universal misery and 'woe? a state incapable of comfort or joy? Let them pre-'tend what they please, who can understand no comfort 'or joy in this life, but what they receive by their senses, 'they can look for nothing else. And whatever be the 'state of this invisible world, the soul can undertake no-'thing of its own conduct after its departure from the bo-'dy. It knows that it must be absolutely at the disposal of 'another.

'Wherefore no man can comfortably venture on and 'into this condition, but in the exercise of that faith, 'which enables him to resign and give up his departing 'soul into the hand of God, who alone is able to receive 'it, and to dispose it into a condition of rest and blessed-

'ness.

'ness. So speaks the apostle; *I am not ashamed, for I know on whom I have believed, and am perswaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day.*

'Herein, as in all other graces, is our Lord Jesus Christ our great example. He resigned his departing spirit into the hands of his Father, to be owned and preserved by him in its state of separation. *Father into thy hands I commit my spirit*, Luke xxiii. 46. as did the Psalmist his type, in alike condition, *Psal.* xxxi. 5. But the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ herein, the object and exercise of it, what he believed and trusted unto in this resignation of his spirit into the hand of God, is at large expressed in the 16th Psalm? *I have* (saith he) *set the Lord always before me*; *because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved: Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* He left his soul in the hand of God, in full assurance that it should suffer no evil in its state of separation, but should be brought again with his body into a blessed resurrection, and eternal glory. So Stephen resigned his soul departing under violence, into the hands of Christ himself. When he died, he said, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit.*

'This is the last victorious act of faith, wherein its conquest over its last enemy death itself doth consist. Herein the soul says in and unto itself, Thou art now taking leave of time unto eternity; all things about thee are departing as shades, and will immediately disappear. The things which thou art entering into are yet invisible, such as *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither will they enter into the heart of man fully to conceive.* Now, therefore, with quietness and confidence give up thyself unto the sovereign power, grace, truth, and faithfulness of God, and thou shalt find assured rest and peace.

'But Jesus Christ it is, who doth immediately receive the souls of them who believe in him. So we see in the instance of Stephen. And what can be a greater encou-

'ragement

'ragement to resign them into his hands, than a daily con-
'templation of his glory in his person, his exaltation, his
'office and grace? Who that believes in him, that belongs
'unto him, can fear to commit his departing spirit unto
'his love, power and care? Even we also shall hereby, in
'our dying moments, see, by faith, heaven opened, and
'Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ready to receive
'us. This added unto the love which all believers have
'unto the Lord Jesus, which is inflamed by contempla-
'tion of his glory, and their desires to be with him where
'he is, it will strengthen and confirm our minds in the re-
'signation of our departing souls into his hand.

'2dly, It is required in us unto the same end, that we be
'*ready and willing to part with the flesh wherewith we are
'cloathed*, with all things that are useful and desirable
'thereunto: The alliance, the relation, the friendship, the
'union that are between the soul and the body, are the
'greatest, the nearest, the firmest that are or can be among
'mere created beings. There is nothing like it, nothing
'equal unto it. The union of three persons in the one single
'divine nature, and the union of two natures in one person
'of Christ, are infinite, ineffable, and exempted from all
'comparison. But among created beings, the union of
'these two essential parts of the same nature in one person,
'is most excellent. Nor is any thing equal to it, or like
'it, found in any other creatures. Those who among
'them have most of life, have either no bodies, as angels;
'or no souls, but what perish with them, as all brute crea-
'tures below.

'Angels being pure immaterial spirits, have nothing in
'them, nothing belonging unto their essence, that can die.
'Beasts have nothing in them that can live when their bo-
'dies die. The soul of a beast cannot be preserved in a
'separate condition, no not by any act of almighty power;
'for it is not; and that which is not, cannot live. It is
'nothing but the body itself in an act of its material
'powers.

'Only the nature of man in all the works of God, is ca-
'pable of this convulsion. The essential parts of it are
'separable by death, the one continuing to exist and act
'its special powers in a separate state or condition. The

'powers

'powers of the whole intire nature acting in soul and body in conjunction, are all scattered and lost by death. But the powers of one essential part of the same nature, that is, of the soul, are preserved after death in a more perfect acting and exercise than before. This is peculiar unto human nature, as a man partaking of heaven and earth, of the perfection of angels above, and of the imperfection of the beasts below. Only there is this difference in these things: Our participation of the heavenly spiritual perfections of the angelical nature, is for eternity; our participation of the imperfections of the animate creatures here below, is but for a season: For God hath designed our bodies unto such a glorious refinement at the resurrection, as that they shall have no more alliance unto that brutish nature, which perisheth for ever. For we shall be *ἰσάγγελοι* like unto angels, or equal to them. Our bodies shall no more be capable of those acts and operation which are now common to us with other living creatures here below.

'This is the pre-eminence of the nature of man, as the wise man declares: For unto that objection of *Atheistical Epicureans*, *As the one dieth so dieth the other; they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast, and all go into one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to the dust again:* He granteth, that as unto their bodies it is for a season, in them we have a present participation of their nature: But, saith he, here lieth the difference, *Who knoweth the spirit of a man that goeth upward, and the spirit of a beast that goeth downward, unto the earth?* Unless we know this, unless we consider the different state of the spirit of men and beasts, we cannot be delivered from this Atheism; but the thoughts hereof will set us at liberty from it. They die in like manner, and their bodies go equally to the dust for a season; but the beast hath no spirit, no soul, but what dies with the body and goes to the dust: If they had, their bodies also must be raised again unto a conjunction with them; otherwise death would produce a new set of creatures unto eternity. But man hath an immortal soul, (saith he) an heavenly spirit, which, when the body goes into the dust for a season, ascends to heaven (where the

'guilt

guilt of sin, and the curse of the law interposed any) from whence it is there to exist, and to act all its native powers in a state of blessedness.

‘ But, as I said, by reason of this peculiar intimate union and relation between the soul and body, there is in the whole nature a fixed aversion from a dissolution. The soul and body are naturally and necessarily unwilling to fall into a state of separation, wherein the one shall cease to be what it was, and the other knows not clearly how it shall subsist. The body claspeth about the soul, and the soul receiveth strange impressions from its embraces; the entire nature existing in the union of them both, being unalterably averse unto a dissolution.

‘ Wherefore, unless we can overcome this inclination, we can never die comfortably or chearfully. We would indeed rather chuse to be cloathed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life, that the cloathing of glory might come on our whole nature, soul and body, without dissolution. But if this may not be, yet then do believers so conquer this inclination by faith and views of the glory of Christ, as to attain a desire of this dissolution. So the apostle testifies of himself, *I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better than to abide here*, *Phil.* i. 23. saith he, I have a desire; Not an ordinary desire; not that which worketh in me now and then, but a constant habitual inclination working in vehement acts and desires. And what doth he so desire? It is ἀναλῦσαι, to depart, say we, out of this body, from this tabernacle, to leave it for a season. But it is such a departure as consists in the dissolution of the present state of his being, that it should not be what it is. But how is it possible that a man should attain such an inclination unto such a readiness for such a vehement desire of a dissolution? It is from a view by faith of Christ and his glory, whence the soul is satisfied, that to be with him is incomparably better than in its present state and condition.

‘ He therefore that would die comfortably, must be able to say within himself and to himself, Die then, thou frail and sinful flesh, *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*: I yield thee up unto the righteous doom of the holy One. Yet therein also I give thee into the hand of

‘ the-

‘ the great Refiner, who will hide thee in thy grave, and
‘ by thy consumption purify thee from all thy corruption
‘ and disposition to evil. And otherwise this will not be.
‘ After a long sincere endeavour for the mortification of all
‘ sin, I find it will never be absolutely perfect but by this
‘ reduction into the dust. Thou shalt no more be a resi-
‘ dence for the least remainder of sin unto eternity, nor any
‘ clog unto my soul in its actings on God. Rest therefore
‘ in hope; for God, in his appointed season, when he *shall
‘ have a desire unto the work of his hands, will call unto
‘ thee, and thou shalt answer him out of the dust.* Then
‘ shall he, by an act of his almighty power, not only restore
‘ thee unto thy pristine glory, as at the first creation,
‘ when thou wast the pure workmanship of his hands; but
‘ enrich and adorn thee with inconceivable privileges and
‘ advantages. Be not then afraid; away with all reluctan-
‘ cy; go into the dust, rest in hope, for thou shalt stand in
‘ thy lot at the end of the days.

‘ That which will enable us hereto in an eminent manner,
‘ is that view and consideration of the glory of Christ; for
‘ he who is now possessed of all that glory, underwent this
‘ dissolution of nature as truly and really as ever we shall do.

‘ *3dly*, There is required hereunto a readiness to comply
‘ with the times and seasons, wherein God would have us
‘ depart and leave this world. Many think they shall be
‘ willing to die when their time is come, but they have ma-
‘ ny reasons, as they suppose, to desire that it may not yet
‘ be, which for the most part arise merely from fear, and an
‘ aversion of death. Some desire to live, that they might
‘ see more of that glorious work of God for his church,
‘ which they believe he will accomplish. So Moses prayed
‘ that he might not die in the wilderness, but go over Jor-
‘ dan and see the good land, and that goodly mountain, and
‘ Lebanon, the seat of the church and of the worship of
‘ God; which yet God thought meet to deny unto him.
‘ And this denial of the request of Moses, made on the high-
‘ est consideration possible, is instructive unto all in the like
‘ case. Others may judge themselves to have some work
‘ to do in the world, wherein they suppose that the glory of
‘ God, and the good of the church is concerned, and there-
‘ fore would be spared for a season. Paul knew not clearly

‘ whether

whether it were not best for him to abide [illegible] the flesh on this account. And David [illegible] the present season of death, because of the work which he had to do for God in the world. Others have other concerns than their own private interests or concerns with respect unto their persons, their families, their relations, and goods in this world; they would see these things in a better and more settled condition before they die, and then they shall be most willing so to do. But it is the love of life that lies at the bottom of all these deferred [illegible], which of itself will never forsake them. But no man can die cheerfully and comfortably, who lives not in a constant resignation of the time and season of his death unto the will of God, as well as himself with respect unto death itself. Our times are in his hand, at his sovereign disposal, and his will in all things must be [illegible] Without this resolution, without this [illegible] can enjoy the least solid peace in this world.

4thly, As the times and seasons, so the ways [illegible] of the approaches of death, have especial [illegible] unless we are prepared for them, will keep us in bondage with the fear of death itself. Long wasting [illegible] ing consumptions, burning fevers, strong pains of the stone, or the like from within, or sword, fire, [illegible] with shame and reproach from without, may be the way of the access of death unto us. Some who have been wholly freed from all fears of death, as a dissolution of nature, who have looked on it as amiable and desirable in itself, have yet had great exercise in their minds about these ways of its approach; they have earnestly desired that this peculiar bitterness of the cup might be removed [illegible] way; to get above all perplexities on the account of these things, is part of our wisdom in dying daily. And we are to have always in a readiness those graces and duties which are necessary thereunto. Such are, a constant resignation of ourselves in all events, unto the sovereign will, pleasure, and disposal of God. May he not do what he will with his own? Is it not right and meet it should be so? Is not his will in all things infinitely holy, wise, just, and good? Doth he not know what is best for us, and what conduceth most unto his own glory? Doth not he

he ſhall do for? So is it to live in the exerciſe of faith, that if God calls us to any of thoſe things which are pe-culiarly dreadful to our natures, he will give us ſuch ſup-plies of ſpiritual ſtrength and patience, as ſhall enable us to undergo them, if not with eaſe and joy, yet with peace and quietneſs beyond our expectation. Multitudes have had experience, that thoſe things which at a diſtance have had an aſpect of overwhelming dread, have been far from unſupportable in their approach, when ſtrength hath been received from above to encounter with them. And more-over, it is in this caſe required, that we be frequent and ſteady in comparing theſe things with thoſe which are e-ternal, both as unto the miſery which we are freed from, and that bleſſedneſs which is prepared for us. But I ſhall proceed no farther with theſe particulars.

"There is none of all the things we have inſiſted on, neither the reſignation of a departing ſoul into the hand of God, nor a willingneſs to lay down this fleſh in the duſt, nor a readineſs to comply with the will of God, as to the times and ſeaſons, or the way and manner of the approach of death, that can be attained unto, without a proſpect of that glory that ſhall give us a new ſtate far more excellent than what we here leave or depart from. This we cannot have, whatever we pretend, unleſs we have ſome preſent views of the glory of Chriſt; an ap-prehenſion of the future manifeſtation of it in heaven, will not relieve us, if here we know not what it is, and where-in it doth conſiſt; if we have not ſome previous diſcove-ry of it in this life. This is that which makes all things eaſy and pleaſant unto us, even death itſelf, as it is a means to bring us unto its full enjoyment, and direct us unto the ſpring and reaſons of them. — But I ſhall here break off, becauſe weakneſs, wearineſs, and the near ap-proaches of death, do call me off from any further labour in this kind.

# A LIST of SUBSCRIBERS.

A

ROBERT Adam at mill of Balgish
[illegible] Adam baxter at Buchlive
William Adam miller at Kilsyth
[illegible] Adamson school-master in Kyte
William Adamson wright
James [illegible] tenant Auchincloch
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Rob. Atkin school master Millgary
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James Allan weaver in Calton
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Hugh Anderson farmer in Nethertown
John Anderson senr farmer in Carluke
John Anderson junr farmer there
Hugh Anderson weaver in Paisley
John Anderson weaver there
William Anderson weaver there
William Anderson soap-maker in Glasgow
[illegible] Anderson coalier Muirhouse
[illegible] Anderson mason in Stirling
[illegible] Anglesey at Clahan of Fintry
[illegible] Arthur weaver Lochwinnoch
[illegible] Arnot mason at Dalkieth
[illegible] Archbald taylor in Denny
[illegible] Auchinvoll wright in Kilsyth
[illegible] Auchinvoll wright in Kilsyth

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Hugh Austin farmer Craigend
Robert Andrew in Ladyard
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Ann Angwas in Kilmany

B

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[illegible] weaver in Dalry
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[illegible] Kilmaurs
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E

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Elisabeth Edmond in Ballochrain
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Hendry Eure elder in Kilsyth
Hugh Erskin weaver in Paisley
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James Ewing farm. in Jaw of Fint.
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John Ewing farmer at Waltoun
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F

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John Fulton shoe-maker there
Allan Faulds clock-maker there
Wm. Finnay smith there
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Al. Ferguson shoe-maker Kilmaurs
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G

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Tho. Gilchrist weav. in [illegible]
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[illegible] Galbreath merch. in Balgais
[illegible] Galbreath in Wester Kaysoun
[illegible] Galbreath dyer in Glasgow
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[illegible] Gemmil weaver there
[illegible] Gemmil weav. Lochwinnoch
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John Gilmour maltman in Gorbals
James Gibson cordener in Govan
John Govan weaver there
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John Glen weaver there
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William Greg weaver in Caltoun
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James Gilles in [illegible]park Kilsyth
John Gourlie farmer in Robreston
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William Gib mason at Dundee
William Glen weaver in Paisley
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H

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I

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Daniel [illegible] Store-master in
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John Lourenour smith in Gateside
Alex. Lyon weaver Govan

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W[illegible] Balinkinrain
John M[illegible] at Balglass
John M[illegible] Muirhouses fine
James M[illegible] miner Wanlockhead
John M[illegible] mason at Inverary
[illegible] Marshal officer of excise
[illegible], fine
[illegible] wright in [illegible]
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